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**FULL UP AND FED UP**







OVER 200,000 OF BRITAIN'S 1,200,000 COAL-MINERS LIVE IN THE FAMOUS SOUTH WALES DISTRICT.

# FULL UP AND FED UP

THE WORKER'S MIND IN CROWDED BRITAIN

BY

WHITING WILLIAMS

AUTHOR OF "WHAT'S ON THE WORKER'S MIND"

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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## FOREWORD

NOBODY could have been more surprised than myself to find that the months of 1919 spent in the labor gangs of America made almost unavoidable a few months of 1920 in the labor gangs of Great Britain.

In this wise:

Following the return to white-collared ways, the country gave surprising approval to the following "Big Four" factors which lay, in my belief, at the bottom of the labor problem here in our own country:

I. The huge importance to the working man—and that means to us all—of that prayer of the industrial era: "Give us this day our daily Job!" The job it is which affords to each of us the platform upon which we stand as members of the modern industrial commonwealth. The job it is which connects each of us up with the doings of others in a way to make us important to them and so to ourselves. The job it is which serves as a crank-shaft by which we get the satisfaction of seeing the forces of our own lives geared up with the forces of others for turning the wheels of the world's work—and so for finding ourselves not altogether valueless. Job gone?—then the rightness of the rest of the circle of our interests gives us little satisfaction—in spite of such testimony as that of the hopeful wife who got out to inspect the rear tire and reported, "Well, John, it is quite flat at the bottom. But the rest of it is fine!"

II. The importance of the part played by our bodies, as the result of their effort to adapt themselves to the conditions of working and living imposed by the job. Especially the power for industrial and civic evil possessed and wielded by those unheavenly twins of "Tiredness and

Temper"—the TNT that causes so many explosions in the trenches of both the family and the factory life.

III. The importance of the mental conditions of the man on the job—the threat of wide-spread evil to be found in the huge volume of misunderstanding between modern employer and modern employee.

IV. The vital importance of what can be called the spiritual conditions which all of us hope to find wrapped up in our job: the deep-down mainspring of our desire to "be somebody" and to "count" most of all by reason of the thing we do—to show ourselves men by virtue of showing ourselves *work*-men.

Something like these four factors, so it has appeared to me, furnish a means of breaking up the problem of industrial relations and so of locating the particular cause of the difficulty in any one case. When a man feels that his body, mind, and spirit are all connected up with each other and with that crank-shaft of the job, then he laughs the laugh of joy. Then, too, he laughs the laugh of scorn not only at the agitator but also at those who would try to persuade him that work is a cruel hang-over from the days when our common ancestor was thrust out of the Garden of Do-nothing for earning his bread with the sweat of his brow.

At least something like that, I am sure, is true for America and Americans.

But is that because we are Americans or because we are humans?

To answer the question required the rather reluctant donning of the overalls and the undergoing of the discomforts of the labor gang in some other country.

To what extent the experiences reported in these pages answer the question which carried me into them—and to what extent they appear to make it desirable to try to get the feelings of the workers of France or Germany, or Italy and Spain—the reader may decide.

# CONTENTS

## PART I—WITH THE WORKERS

| CHAPTER                                                                   | PAGE |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| I. INTO STRANGE WATERS—FROM A LONDON DOCK . . .                           | 3    |
| II. BY THE SMELTERS AND STOVES OF SOUTH WALES . . .                       | 26   |
| III. "BACK TO THE MINES" AND THE "BOLSHIES"! . . .                        | 61   |
| IV. "WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH GLASGOW?" . . .                               | 123  |
| V. WITH THE 'ANDS ON SMELTING STAGE, CINDER PIT AND<br>CAST BED . . . . . | 170  |
| VI. MIDST THE MINERS AND MACHINISTS OF THE MILD MID-<br>LANDS . . . . .   | 205  |
| VII. LIVING THE DOUBLE LIFE IN LONDON . . . . .                           | 234  |
| VIII. THE WORST JOB YET . . . . .                                         | 275  |

## PART II—ONE INTERPRETATION

|                                                                                           |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| IX. "FULL UP!" . . . . .                                                                  | 285 |
| X. "FED UP!" . . . . .                                                                    | 294 |
| XI. HOW MANY JOBS TO A NATION? . . . . .                                                  | 301 |
| XII. THE DOMESTIC PAY ENVELOPE AND "INTERNATIONAL<br>CREATIVE EVOLUTION" . . . . .        | 308 |
| XIII. CAN WE GET "THE AIR" TO THE "WORKING FACES" IN<br>THE WORLD FACTORY MINE? . . . . . | 318 |



## ILLUSTRATIONS

|                                                                                                                                                                       |                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Over 200,000 of Britain's 1,200,000 coal-miners live in the famous South Wales District . . . . .                                                                     | <i>Frontispiece</i> |
|                                                                                                                                                                       | FACING PAGE         |
| Dockers unloading copra or cocoanut-meat for making oil, cattle-food, and oleomargarine at a London dock . . . . .                                                    | 18                  |
| "They tells us as 'ow we should sive our money. So 'ere we are!"                                                                                                      | 18                  |
| Blast-furnaces of this hand-charged type are now being replaced by machine-charged furnaces of newer and larger type . . . .                                          | 28                  |
| Salt firemen of Northern England . . . . .                                                                                                                            | 94                  |
| "'E been now," his wife said, "as good a mon as 'e been bawd before—awnd no one could say more than thot!" . . . . .                                                  | 94                  |
| "Dirty Dick's my name, but I'm not dirty-minded" . . . . .                                                                                                            | 94                  |
| A saloon or "pub" in London's East End as a "neighborhood centre" to which the babe in arms is becoming accustomed early                                              | 134                 |
| Children in a crowded Glasgow district . . . . .                                                                                                                      | 134                 |
| Crowds listening to the smooth-tongued salesmen of "riot, racing, or religion—representatives of a better chance in either this world or the world to come" . . . . . | 168                 |
| The crowd waits as the bookies mark up their preferences at the week-end whippet races . . . . .                                                                      | 168                 |
| Separating the "pigs" from the "sow" in a Middlesbrough "cast-bed" . . . . .                                                                                          | 182                 |
| The author as he is and as he was when in search of work in Britain                                                                                                   | 266                 |



*PART I*  
WITH THE WORKERS





# WITH THE WORKERS

## CHAPTER I

### INTO STRANGE WATERS—FROM A LONDON DOCK

Whitechapel, East End, London,  
June 29, 1920.

THE most surprising thing is the interest every one here shows in my plan, queer and strange though it seems to them. The head of a group of manufacturers has already given his expert approval of the idea to begin in the South Wales tin-plate and coal districts; go thence to the Clyde bank, near Glasgow, where the very numerous radical workers are taken much more seriously than their less active though louder-talking comrades among the Welsh workers; ending up with the more conservative and newer steel centre of the British Pittsburgh, Middlesbrough, near Newcastle, and finally the older Sheffield district. This adviser is a college man and seems to feel that the freemasonry of college men—evidently more marked over here—would require him to help me if nothing else. In that connection he said yesterday that the English worker is likely to be suspicious of me because:

“It will seem a bit odd to them, you know, that your friends are willing to let you go so low. That wouldn’t be done over here. A decent job, you see, would be found for you by some one if for nothing else than to save a fellow member of one’s own class.”

But he seemed to think that I might meet all that by letting on that I was a hard drinker!

Similarly the head of a big firm of engineers and equippers of steel plants was not at all of the suspicious sort that some friends at home had made me think I might encounter:

"Your plan of first-hand study of this labor problem is odd enough, but it certainly has enormous possibilities, and I want to help every bit I can." Then he proceeded to ask if I wouldn't do him the favor of doing a few days' work among the bricklayers who are in his employ building a big glass plant, and who are said to represent one of the hardest trades to get along with in the empire. Inasmuch as the job is near by, in London, it seems a proper way of repaying the various courtesies he will extend during the summer.

In one sense this country seems to be in a very bad way in this matter of labor, in another not so bad. The subject does not seem on people's tongues to the same extent as in America. The fact that it is all put over into politics appears to give the man on the street the idea that it is by way of being worked out. Then the fact that the unions are so much on the job further supports the idea that it will somehow take care of itself without the ordinary citizen's bothering.

"Practically every one of our workers is in some union or other," was the way an official of an iron and steel manufacturers' association put it. "With every one of these unions where it is at all feasible we have had for the last thirty years an agreement to pay wages on the basis of tonnage, and also on a sliding scale according to the selling price of the product. In the case of the one solitary strike of any consequence in these thirty years, everything was settled by the establishment of this rule of sliding scale. This the makers had heretofore held out against in that particular connection. Since then there has been no trouble anywhere of any size—that is, with the steel men. We do

have trouble occasionally with the special trades, like the steam-fitters, machinists, and others. You see, to them steel is only a side issue. Of the distinctly steel unions the representatives go over the company's sales books every three months. In that way they make sure that the selling price for the three months' period has been as represented, and on the basis of any change of price the wage agreement is continued. In America I understand this sliding-scale arrangement is practised, at least so far as steel is concerned, only in the steel-sheet industry. I presume it is in operation there as the direct result of your importation of our Welsh 'sheet-workers.' "

Among the workers in general labor matters appear far from quiet and contented. The Labor Party in its annual session at Scarborough has just now publicly stated that, in its opinion, "In spite of all kinds of conciliation machinery the relations between the workers and the owners were never worse." It intimates that all the idealism of the war has been completely lost, with nothing done in any way to make the war worth its prodigious cost. The party is apparently very strongly for nationalization of coal and all sorts of things. In several of its proposals it is said to be doing a certain amount of pussyfooting, as befits an organization which must keep its eye on the votes—which, by the way, Mr. Gompers and Mr. J. P. Frye of our own A. F. of L. give as the reason why they oppose the Labor Party idea for America. The party also turns down government purchase of the liquor trade and eschews prohibition, but does go on record for local option, evidently having in mind that this is the way things began to happen with us. A well-known American official, by the way, remarked to-day that in his belief this country would go dry in five years—largely as the result of getting the wet-and-dry issue into the field of good or bad industry here as at home.

But, even though the average citizen here doesn't seem as keen to talk about the labor problem as in "the States," still two things come strongly into the view of the newcomer. For one thing, the country is certainly having a great time with strikes—I should say at least quite as bad if not worse than we. The day we landed, the National Union of Gas-Workers was threatening strike in a very serious way. They wanted a forty-four-hour week (now forty-seven), double time for Sundays, week-ends, etc., with ten shillings a week immediate advance. Gas seems to sell already at ten or twelve shillings for 1,000 cubic feet! The wireless men on the big liners were also preventing sailing because of a strike. The dockers have lately got a very successful award of two shillings an hour—quite high here—but are now wanting more work badly. In fact, my pet idea about the importance of the job was upheld before the end of my very first English newspaper page! There stood the words: "The dockers' great need is not for registration, not for government measures, not even for a rise in wages. The dockers' great need is *regular work*."

Even the notably happy workers of Lord Leverholme at Port Sunlight have been announced as having a dispute on. Of course, the strike of the munition workers in Ireland and the civil war in Londonderry have also been much in the papers. Besides the political factors in the Irish mix-up, it seems that much of the trouble has its roots in the economic problem. One correspondent says that serious trouble always starts when the sons of the Catholics have difficulty getting good jobs with the Ulstermen, who are reported at the head of most of the business concerns in "Derry," and in many other factory cities. The small number of Irish factory cities, especially in the most unhappy part of Ireland, is given as one reason why so little interest seems to be taken in the whole Irish problem by the average business man here. The possibility of an Irish



rail strike seems to be very much on the mind of J. H. Thomas, the conservative head of the Railway Men's Union.

The papers have also been carrying word of a threatened strike of the (unionized) bank clerks of Scotland and elsewhere. In near-by columns appears a statement of the Minister of Labor that "Food in May was 146 per cent over pre-war; in June 155 per cent." (This is not quite the same as the cost of living, into which other items must be figured with appropriate "weighting.") The same ministry also stated that the percentage of unemployed among workers covered by the insurance list was 2.68 on May 28 and 2.80 on April 30, with conditions good in most trades except boot and shoe and the weaving section of the cotton trade. Weekly wages of about 1,700,000 work-people showed a total increase 750,000 pounds sterling. This represents those increases recently secured by the dock laborers, also others won by the building trades, dress-making, and cotton and woollen operatives. About 250,000 workers also lessened their working week by about two and a half hours.

Altogether it would look as though labor matters were moving.

The second of these noticeable things is the general conviction in public and business circles that the English worker is lying down on the job disgracefully—and that nothing can be done about it.

"You'll find all our workers taking things jolly easy," appears to be the universal testimony except when it is: "Well, you'll find our men doing much less in a day than yours." Usually the blame is placed upon the union. "We can't sell our furnaces on the basis of the men it will save, because the unions make everybody use so many men for so many furnaces, whether or no. So we can only talk the saving of coal," said a salesman from America.

How this will turn out to be in actuality it will be highly interesting to see.

Of one thing I am pretty sure—namely, that the roots of whatever loafing there is—and perhaps also of the apparently universal membership in the union—will be found very close to the same thing that is on the mind of the dock workers—the daily job, “regular work.” That seems to be one reason why the unions are not apparently defending the government’s Employment Exchanges, now under criticism as expensive. They pretty generally want to handle the getting of jobs for their men themselves as a fundamental service for their members.

“We said to our bricklayers,” said my engineering friend, “‘here we are paying you more than the union rate and yet you throw us down whenever you jolly please, or when some other local asks you to. Why don’t you chuck the union?’ They turned around on us at once and said: ‘Can you guarantee us a job for every day in the year we need one?’”

Well, we shall see what we shall see. I’m sure it’s going to be worth while, anyway—whatever happens. Because from this set-up it is evident, surely, that the problem isn’t so different as to prevent my experiences here from being useful in giving a better light into our problem back home.

And now good night to get ready for moseying nonchalantly around onto that bricklayer’s helper’s job to-morrow.

Later—June 30th.

Am told to-day that the uneasiness noticed in the current papers comes from a very distinct increase of unemployment within the last two or three weeks—since the period covered by the Labor Ministry’s figures. People are evidently having much the same scare we had back home two months ago.

Should have mentioned last night, also, the doings on

shipboard coming over. Though the boat was operating under American registry, most of the men were English and reflected English rather than American conditions. The stewards had a near-strike because they were being worked over ten hours per day with no extra pay whatever for overtime. The difficulty was narrowly averted by the steward's promising the extra pay. The second engineer was as black as coal when he took me down into the stoke-hole, but the thing that worried him most—it came to his lips time after time—was his beloved, though I must say, bedraggled-looking, engine:

“We used to be able to get in a few coal-passers, and have every rod as clean as your face around here. But it can't be done now—against union rules to bring 'em in and the men themselves won't do it, not even when we're in port, and they've nothing else to do!”

Whitechapel, London,  
July 1, 1920.

A long and slow-moving, but very worth-while day. Like many others of its kind it has been a demonstration of the way men wear their hearts, if not on their sleeves, then at least much closer to the surface than we white-collared folk are apt to think.

In the morning I got again into my old clothes, with many misgivings, feeling myself very much a stranger in a far country, and even less able to guess what might happen to me in these parts than when the other start was made a year and a half ago. In the restaurant where I got eggs, bacon, a pot of tea, and bread and butter for the surprising price of one and ten pence—about thirty-five cents according to the present exchange which gives nearly five shillings to the dollar—I felt sure I was dressed too badly for the place, until some others who looked still tougher and nearer the edge of things were good enough to come in. One of

these asked the girl for tea and one egg, and then proceeded to unwrap some pieces of bread he had brought with him.

When I finally got to the bricklayer's helper's job, I was again pleased with the way the other unskilled workers who lined up waiting for a chance at similar jobs took me in without an instant's delay. The boss of the job, however, turned me down cold—nicely but firmly:

"Matter of fact, I've got more men than I know what to do with now."

"Yer see, it's the skilled men as is wanted—bricklayers and the likes o' that. So they cawn't take more of us," one of my fellow applicants explained.

There were so many kinds of workers all about the plant that was being erected for making bottles by machinery according to an American patent, that no one seemed to object to my loafing around to see and hear all possible. I must say that there seemed extremely little loafing by the bricklayers or their assistants who brought them the hod-loads of bricks and mortar up the ladders from below. Still there was a good deal of eating of an occasional sandwich and drinking from a tea or coffee can. The young American in charge of the installation of the patent process—he either didn't think I was an American or else was unwilling to admit it for fear I'd strike him for a job—is quite sure that these workers do not get as much done in a day as ours. But they all kept on the job very well, except the carpenters, who would not work as long as it continued "rainin' quite tidy, you know." One of the machine-fitters was evidently loafing and ready to talk with a stranger in explanation of the furnace he was fixing for carrying the moulded bottles through on a continuous chain. His partner berated him for sitting there "like a bloomin' log," while he went in search of a stick long enough to make a measurement. "For every one o' these things we got to go find a new stick. If only we'd save 'em we'd save our-



selves, too. But what's the odds?" About that time he made me feel as if I was back home on some factory job as he exclaimed: "Ah, there's the Mogul! I mustn't sit here like this!" Whereupon he caught up a handy wrench and went through the motions of tightening a bolt! Of course, to help him fool his boss I sauntered away.

The plans of the plant represent the last word in labor and time-saving machinery, but the contractors are certainly using many hand-wound or horse-drawn windlasses for clumsily raising all sorts of materials to the high platforms. The finished plant is expected to turn out something like 5,000 gross of all kinds of bottles every twenty-four hours—without a glass-blower in the place!

"There's nothin' in the wye of a job to be got outside, anywheres now, and that's the truth." That was the burden of the conversation an hour later when I dropped into a cheap eating-place in Woolwich near the government shipyard, and about a mile from the arsenal.

"Yes, I took a few days off—told the Colonel I was resignin' for a week, ye understand—and looked and looked everywhere and no good it was to me, so I came back," a red-haired man from "the West of Ireland" put in with a bitter smile.

"Unemployment insurance? Yes, fifteen bob a week! That 'ardly pays for your fags! What good does it do you, hi?" That was the way a serious-looking chap with an attractive face and a linen duster of a clerk's coat put it. "But no wonder there's the 'igh cost of livin' with all the money's bein' spent by the government—3,000,000 pounds they're talkin' about now fer givin' the soldiers a bally lot o' scarlet dress uniforms that's no good to nobody."

"An' all the waste and the loafin' there in the shipyard! Why, if I was asked to destriye all the stuff that many men's asked to destriye right over there—war stuff, you know, like the tables that was used by the German prisoners, and

that's havin' their legs knocked off so they can pack 'em away nice and regular and military like, you know—well, I'd fair tell 'em they could have my job! W'y, we all spend hours in there movin' stuff from here over to there, and from there over to that place, and then, after we go along, a new gang moves 'em from there to back where they was when we found 'em. And even at that, not one of us does a decent and self-respectin' day's work."

"But when you 'ave your money," breaks in the clerk again, "your three-pound-fourteen a week, what 'ave you got? If you 'ave childern, a man simply can't live."

When he added that, for one thing, there was too much class idea in it all, I expected to see it take a different turn from the Irishman's cut-in:

"You've said it! W'y, let a man walk down street with his workin' clothes on, and out of a dozen girls he passes not two of 'em will give him so much as a look, to say nothing of answering his how do you do! But when he's got some good clothes on as a clerk and rubs two shillings together then they come his way nice enough!"

"Well, I'm off for Canada the end of the summer," he went on as he produced a letter from a pal who reported with great detail the values he was getting for his money over there in the way of laundry, meals, etc. The letter concluded with "—and in four or five years of this I'm coming back home to buy the finest 'pub' you got in your whole blamed country and take life easy."

The evident effect of the reading was so strong that it coincided with my earlier observations that it is by means of such first-hand testimony that most of the decisions of the workers—if not of most of the rest of us—are made from day to day. "My brother, he over here, send for me," the foreign-born workers in America were always saying in explanation of their comings over or their movings from one place in the country to another. Such com-

munications serve as the great means of instruction about things they cannot see, just as the eyes of their daily experience teach them from moment to moment what to think about the things going on around them. Much of the whole attitude of the workers toward government there at home, I found thus based not so much on what they read in the papers as on what they saw going on around them on their job. Said one of this group:

"Well, I tried hard enough to buy one of the cases they make for carryin' the parts of a cannon—cost three pounds to make, they did, and they're sellin' 'em at auction for two shillin'! 'But, of course,' they says to me, 'we can't sell 'em in less 'n lots of fifty!' And then Lloyd George and the rest of 'em comes down and pats us on the back—and wouldn't know us from Adam any other time—no, nor care."

"Well, let me tell you, we'll all be lucky to have our jobs this winter. It's goin' to be a 'ard time, in my opinion," broke in a very sedate and quiet person of the head-machinist type.

"I don't know what brings you over here," the red-haired and fiery-dispositioned man from Ireland confided afterward when he hailed me on the street and we were alone. "But for Heaven's sake, don't think o' working here! Everybody loses all his ambition here—they hold onto the same job exactly now that they had twenty year ago. W'y, you know, even the tramway men call out, 'Convalescent's Home!' or 'Saint's Rest!' when they stop here or at the arsenal! I give you my word, they just don't remember how to work after they's been here a few years. It's awful! Of course, you'll get your three-pounds-fourteen, *but you'll be disrespected—by yourself and everybody else!* Here am I—nothin' but common labor—at the bottom of the whole pile and shootin' match! And I've had forty-seven public appearances ridin' the best horses in the coun-

try! That's what the war has done for me! Now, my friend in Canada—he's better circumstanced than I—that is, he's not married. But my wife—well, she's young but she's wise, you understand. I was sayin' to her last night, 'Now here we are, we're fairly comfortable.' We live with her old man and that helps, so we can save about fifteen shillin' a week besides takin' care of our three-year-old. 'We can go to a show when we want to,' I says, 'and have a drink when we want it. And we're as good as a lot of the rest of the people here in this town,' I says. 'But where will we be in ten years from now—when I'm forty years old? Where'll we be then?' I says. An' she says she's game, so I'm goin' to be lookin' up a White Star liner one of these days and see if I can't get started as a steward or something. Somehow or other I got to make somethin' of myself. I'll fair die if I got to stick around and be general labor all my life. And I'm gettin' old just worryin' about what I should do—till I think I could fair shoot Llide George if he was standin' there now."

And then he proceeded to hand me a jolt:

"Course that—even that—wouldn't be so bad for me. My brother and me—well, we murdered a policeman in Ireland only last winter. You see, he was arrestin' a man and we tried to take the man away from him and my brother he tapped him too hard with an iron pipe he had. And after he was down I kicked him in the face—and he seemed to be done for worse than we thought for. So the rest of 'em said we didn't ought to leave him in his misery that way. So we all went at it and finished him off. That's the way they do it in Ireland—they don't believe in lettin' people lie in their misery—and everybody helps. The jury disagreed three times, so we was let off. My mother she thinks I'm pretty bloody bad and writes for me not to come home now that so many gangs is gettin' together and doin' mostly nothin' but murderin'. No, I'd not advise you to look for work over there.

“But there’s too much bloody misery right here—and that’s a fact—and that’s what’s worryin’ me. There, look at those fellows in fine clothes! This one’s getting exactly eight bob a week less than I, but he’s payin’ his father nothin’ a week for his board, so he can loaf and get along. The same with these dressed-up chaps over there—and all their wound stripes will only get ’em more trouble findin’ work—there’s 250,000 soldiers out of work here now and 75,000 in Canada. And these fellows, at that, can’t save much even if they ain’t married. The trouble with a married man is that if he does save, there’s always something happening to use up the coupla quid (pounds) he thought he had laid away for good—the baby’s got to have some shoes you hadn’t counted on or something—and after that’s happened a few times and you see you’re no better off than you were before, w’y then you chuck the whole bloody idea! Well, there’s the bell and I’ll have to go in and support the government by movin’ things around some more—or destriyin’ ’em. Good luck to you.”

Yesterday I was told that Woolwich arsenal is in charge of a very progressive man who is much interested in the plan of keeping the organization going by making engines and similar supplies in between wars, as it were. The place now keeps something like 17,000 men busy with all their operations as compared with 90,000 in war time.

Across the river at the Prince Albert docks I watched some very big strong men let a helper swing back and forth great quarters of beeves, as they came along suspended from monorail conveyers off a great boat which had brought 7,000 tons of them from the Argentine. When they swung high enough so the men could get their shoulders under them, they marched with them up the incline and pitched them jauntily down into the hold of a barge or lighter which would doubtless require the services of other men to take them out again farther up the river in London.



"Three thousand of 'em in a day—and fifty bob (shilling) a day a man for doin' it (two pounds ten or \$12.50 at ordinary exchange). Why, the fellows that has done this too regular ain't (pronounced eyent) the size of a half a man now. Not a woman as would look at 'em! Well, I've been everywhere—in the States, Australia, New Zealand! But I guess I like this better than all. And this job keeps me fit—only when the lighter sets as high as this and you have to go up the incline—that's what tykes it out of you. But this job—well, it makes you go at a big steak this way—gobble, gobble! It's fair medicine for me, this job."

He had been three years and four months in the army—as everybody among the workers and I guess everybody else, for that matter, seems to have been—and was as big and handsome and attractive a worker as I've seen in a long time. I kept wanting to say that we needed men like him in my country. I thought he might be a hard drinker—and perhaps he is—but he surprised me. That was when, after he had expressed his wish for a drink instead of the cup of tea which the company furnishes the gang, he came out with:

"Yes, I'd like to see it dry over here, too. And there's many others as would say that here if they spoke their minds. Why, right over there in that boat there from America there's men that'll tell you, 'Why, in the country we come from we've got friends as was in the gutter, and now, by God, they're wearin' a collar and tie.'"

If the workers can have an abundance of such "demonstration" the world won't be long going dry!

With that he ran off to take his turn at the tea, beer not being available on the dock. Tea is served to all the clerks in London offices at four as regular as clockwork. Some of the heads have told me that an amazing amount of work is done between that and closing time at five-thirty.

I would give a lot to know the full details of the major

factors in the life of the next man who topped off my day. He was old and thin and badly weather-beaten, but evidently still very active, as we got to talking on the foot-bridge going over the railway near the docks.

"Yes, I'm a docker now. An' during the war t'was a good job—with men scarce and wages 'igh. Now there's plenty o' work but plenty o' men, too. It's five weeks since I been able to pay me union dues. Thot's saxpence the week. There's been nothin' fer me to do but take the chawnce of pickin' up a coupla bob 'ere carryin' somun's bags or boxes—and a-sleepin' wherever I could at night. I 'aven't 'ad a chawnce ter wash me face the day to-day. That's after forty years knockin' around on the sea in 'windbags' and steamers—all kinds o' ships and ivery part of the world—in the stoke-hole and on the decks since I wuz fifteen years old. Me family? Ah, they've all flew away, ivery wan of thim—with two sons thot went down with the army. I'm the only wan left—and I suppose I'll be agoin' wan of these days; they say iverybody's got to. Yis, it's been worth while—with a lot of knockin' about." And then his soul seemed to blaze up, as, with shaking finger, he shouted:

"But they's men in there—thousands of 'em—thot's 'ad a job ivery day fer weeks—ivery day for weeks! Thot's not right! They should tike their turn—iverybody should divide up and iverybody 'ave his share o' work. Look at this fellow a-closin' of 'is gates afore the trine is near! Well, he's got 'is job and 'e's goin' ter do 'is duty and everybody else can look out fer 'imself!"

As I said good-by I told him I could ask him in for a drink but thought he might be able to use the bob to good advantage to himself, and that I could spare it before getting a cattle boat back to the States. If ever face and arms and voice spoke thanks with the quickness of a flash his did, as he grabbed for my hand with his: "Oh! Oh!"



In an instant his eyes were commencing to be full. "Why, this'll buy me a real bed to-night!" And again his hand—a horny hand it was of all that I have ever clasped—and again his: "Oh! Oh! That'll buy me a real bed— Good-bye to ye and good luck to ye. I'll think of ye this night on me bed! Good-by."

So, as I've been riding back to my quarters on top of a bus, past mile after mile of gray slums, I've kept repeating to myself: "Men are so much better at bottom than they appear on the surface—so much truer when you get a good close-up, local connection than by the ordinary 'long-distance' contacts of this specialized and classified old world—so much better."

Whitechapel, London,  
July 3, 1920.

It has been a day of getting closer to the Far East than ever before—down in the midst of the odd cargoes and the medley of British and Indian workers and the strange Oriental smells which the big ships bring into the East India dock. It gave a chance to jump down into the lighters and to heft the huge ivory tusks, some of them nearly twelve feet long from their sharp points to where they seem to have been torn out by the roots—some of them colored like a fine old pipe, others carved fancifully to show a crocodile swallowing a long snake which in turn is swallowing a frog—tons and tons of these tusks thrown carelessly out of the big East Indian liner into the waiting barge, by which most of the freight seems to be taken to the various markets or storage places farther up in London. A short distance away it was possible to taste the "foot sugar" from Madras or the copra or cocoanut shell and cocoanut "meat" from various Oriental places—hardly any tastier than the sheeps' wool, the worn-out auto tires, the jute, or the coffee.

All these things seem to look good to the dockers or



DOCKERS UNLOADING COPRA OR COCOANUT-MEAT FOR MAKING OIL, CATTLE-FOOD, AND OLEOMARGARINE AT A LONDON DOCK.



"THEY TELLS US AS 'OW WE SHOULD SIVE OUR MONEY.  
SO 'ERE WE ARE!"

Getting bits of coal from the ash heap in an industrial centre. (With the instinct of the eternal feminine, the lady has removed her cap in order to be at her best.)



stevedores, for they spell bread and butter—or, at worst, “marge” as they call oleomargarine—at the rate of sixteen bob a day of eight hours. From the way they put their shoulders under the great bags, many of them weighing two hundred pounds, I’d say they aren’t afraid of work by a long shot. As soon as the winch—or the hydraulic crane—has deposited the load of bales and bundles on the dock, they seem to tear into them in proper style. In a moment they get their truck loaded and off down the way to the lighter, indulging occasionally in banter and language that would make even my old friends on the open-hearth floor take off their hats—some of it too curdled for an American to understand without more practice than I’ve had yet.

“Thanks fer calling me a dog,” came out in one dispute. “Well, if ’arf of us wuz dogs, ’twould be a better warrld than ’tis now, becuz dogs is true and men eyent.”

One thing is sure, it is impossible to get very far away from the thought of the job—the steady job—while moving around among these chaps, whether inside the great dock’s stone gate or out. My ease in talking things over with them grew greater after several of them came up and after reaching behind their ears to produce an inch or inch and a half of cigarette, coolly took a light from mine without a word. The shortness of the treasured cigarettes may possibly be explained by the story which is said to be popular among the district’s schoolboys—“The other day I went into a tobacconist’s to get me a cigar and a man trod on me fingers.”

“There’s bloody little work around ’ere now,” was the testimony of an old man of seventy who repeated the general complaint. “Durin’ the war they was enough fer all—but ye can see all the men that’s witin’ fer somethin’ ’ere to-dye. Yuss”—with amazing fervor when I mentioned the husky piece-workers of yesterday afternoon,—“yuss,

I know them piece-work fellies! They gets their fifty bob a dye all right by a-doin' of the work of two or three good men—a puttin' bread and jam inter their bellies and sayin' 'Chuck you, Jack,' to the rest of us. But that's like the rest o' the world now. Forty years ago I was a devil fer work meself, but I'd allus share a shillin' with any one and they with me. But nowadays they see a man in the gutter and let him bloody well lie! . . . But I got me pension now—ten bob a week—and with the other ten bob I can pick up I gets along—just as I hev since I wuz fourteen and started off ter sea—without no schoolin' after I was seven."

"See them Lascars?" said a red-faced, unshaven fellow in badly soiled coat, greasy handkerchief for necktie, spotted corduroy pants, and the heaviest of boots, all in very great contrast with the East Indian's bare feet, gray denim trousers and jumper, black beard and dish-rag of a turban. "The law's been lettin' them things and the Chinks get the places on the boats that should belong to us. 'Taint right."

"Ye'll 'ave trouble findin' work and that's the truth," a man in charge of one of the lighters informed me. He was well dressed and looked intelligent. "Of course the reason is that so many has listened to this 'ere propagander about more production! 'More production!' the mawsters say. *If there wasn't a good many as didn't 'eed it, there'd be no job fer nobody now 'ereabouts.*"

Before lunching in one of the worst-looking emporiums of fried fish that could be conceived, I took a glass of what he called "ile" (ale) with my old friend. I hoped to find that my old lumber hobo was right when he testified that booze made you "mind the dirt and the flies less." At the table of the "fish and chips" place a bright-looking Jewish boy was good enough to insist that I share with him from a great loaf of bread he drew from his pocket. It helped a



lot to put down the half-cooked fish and the greasy potatoes. He added his own to the general testimony that American employers are better than the English and was evidently well pleased with his present job with one of them.

"Two days o' work I've 'ad this week and only one lawst week," was the sad testimony of another worker who was not a member of the union, but looked rather prosperous.

"If you've got a card and are well known in these parts, mebbe," was the sufficiently pointed reply of a laborer who was outside the gates of another dock a mile or so away where I asked about the chances.

"Now (no), never 'awve Ah been to the stites," answered a thin-faced and slight-framed man of broad accent at still another dock as we stood opposite the policemen who were examining the packages of some of the passengers just in from Alexandria. "But otherwise, I've been much around the wawrld—as a *firemon like yourself*. But ye'll never be a-gettin' awve a boat from 'ere. Ye should try the Surrey or the Tilbury Docks."

"Two mont's here since come from Alexandria—fireman" a black-bearded man who said he was an Egyptian and certainly looked it in spite of his English clothes and his stoker's or fireman's sweat-rag about his neck. "Mostly sleep on streets nights," he added sadly.

It may, of course, be that some of them are telling as large tales as I am. But when they take me for a fellow fireman, share their bread with me, and accept the light of my cigarette without asking for it, it can be put down pretty certainly that their tales are not meant to secure the sympathy they might expect for the right kind of a story if we were not pals together. At any rate they seem to accept without reservations my tale of having made "a bit of money over in the States workin' in steel, y' un-

derstand, and wanted to come over for a look 'round, like; worked me passage with a lot of cattle" (true enough and twice true but twenty years and more ago), "was promised a free go on the boat back in three weeks, but meanwhile, ye see, I'm out of money and where the devil can I get a job, huh?"

Well, it all looks like a hard life, but there may be some compensations, judging by the free and easy way most of them seem to take it all—including, especially, their "ile" in the big glasses holding a full pint.

Whitechapel,  
Saturday, July 3, 1920.

'Twas a breath of home to read the *Times*' very friendly American Fourth of July supplement and its editorial this morning—very much in line with the words of a great tall chap encountered this afternoon over by the docks: "It's 'awnd in 'awnd we should go, you Johnny Browns and we Johnny Bulls. I can bloody well see that it's you and not us as is goin' ter 'ave the biggest nivy, and we don't want yer comin' over 'ere ner us a 'avin' ter go over there, neither."

"Fer the *Daily Mirror*, hye?" my docker friends of yesterday all called good-naturedly to me as I aimed my camera at them to-day. I was better dressed than yesterday and they didn't recognize me. In the "public house" money and beer flowed fast and furious, seeing that all had been paid off for the week of forty-four hours. The war-time restrictions seem still to keep the places closed till twelve, then open till two-thirty and again open from five till ten. All the workers so far assure me that "Everybody tikes enough ter last 'im inbetweens and they's more beer drunk now than before." But I doubt it. So far I've seen less drunkenness than on my other trip here. Still that may be because of the complaint everybody makes of the prohibitive cost of spirits for the poor man.



"A bloody revolution there'll be if ever they try to tike our liberty—and our beer—away from us as they did over there!" is the general testimony, apparently, in the pubs. Of course, they don't mean necessarily that blood would flow. The adjective is merely a manner of speaking, as it were. "Wy, Ga blime, they's enough bloody tar in them laces," explains one friend, when a boy calls out, "Penny apiece," "to run a bleedin' rileway trine! A bloke carn't put on 'is bloody boots fer the bloody tar, 'e carn't."

"Work? Sure, there's work—if yu've got a good berth," says an elderly person of fairly comfortable looking type, while his profane partner pokes fun at him for the years in Canada denoted by his "Sure!" "Me!" he continues, "I've got me job now fer life—now thet I've been reinstated fer me pension that I lost after the last strike.—Aye, a foreman I was—once. No, not a dye of schoolin' 'ave I 'ad. I went to work when I was nine, when me father died. I'm sixty-eight. A good dozen o' childern I got, too. Me daughter's married—the oldest—and runs a big boardin' 'ouse. But it's years since she's spoke a word to me—not since the time she found me makin' love to a woman when me second wife was layin' dead in the front room. 'Course she was mad. But blood will flow, won't it, I asks yer? Nature will 'ave its way, now won't it?"

"Pilferin'? Wy, of course there's pilferin' on the docks. Yer see, they puts so much cargo in 'ere durin' the war,'" explained one of his friends, as we were pushed up together at the bar by the rush of incomers, "that they was fruit from Californy all over the plice. Wull, with all the bloody rats a-eatin' all the bleedin' libels (labels) off, yer 'ad ter open 'um up and 'ave a look an' a tyste ter tell wuz they pineapples er plooms."

"Two quid (pounds) ighte (eight) shillin' Ah've mide this week on them," testified a great hulk of a fellow who seemed to know my friends well, as we got to talking about the way

so many people seem to put money on the horses that appear to race every day. "No fear aw've it's getting inter the bank," he added in answer to my question—"not with five chicks ter buy shoes fer."

They were still treating each other to their great black pints when I said good-by. Later I was lucky enough to come upon an unusually intelligent worker with a clean white collar, waiting with his boy of nine for his tram.

"Yes, my line is stevedoring—not at this dock—and I'm not like most of these chaps here. They're casuals. That's bad. And working one day and no job the next makes them lazy, too. I'm in a union of dock, dredge, river, and general workers that has an agreement with stevedore contractors that pay us each three pounds ten a week, whether we work or not, and sixteen shillings a day when we do. And if there's no work at one dock they transfer us to another. The union always plays square and we can trust them to work everything out to everybody's satisfaction without our having to do more than pass a vote. Of course there's some of these here Russians running about talking about their line, but I don't think they're getting far with it. Now look at these people all waiting for their turn at the seats here in the bus. Could you do better than that in America? . . . Yes, I think we'll have it dry here one of these days. But I see a lot of the men coming over from your country on the boats—the workers, you know—that drink a lot of spirits—not beer like we do—when they get over here."

It would look as though he was the type that men say make the back-bone of the country. He certainly demonstrates splendidly the dignity which comes to the proud possessor of the steady job. It's almost inconceivable that he does the same kind of work as the others I've been mixing with. There will probably be more of this type following the legislation which the bright Jewish young

worker told me of yesterday. That will provide for keeping boys in school till sixteen and then, within seven years, or as soon as the facilities may be provided, until they're eighteen. That looks good, taken in connection with the care young children are said to be given by the health authorities from several weeks before they are born up till school age at five when they will start coming in for an annual health examination by the school authorities.

Well, those docks are certainly interesting—with their international angles of both trade and the labor problem.

Hope to get off Monday to Wales, though it looks rather scary whether there will be any job, with the business world so unhappy about the proposed "Excess Profits Duty" tax of sixty per cent—in addition to the present income tax of six shillings to the pound. Anyway, it lessens the tendency to homesickness to see all the papers here excited about the same old American items of the government's "squandermania"; the London County Council's six per cent housing bonds under criticism for going into houses too expensive for the workers—and not being subscribed for; labor-unions getting jumped on for not being representative, with 4,000,000 workers in and 9,000,000 out, etc., etc. It does look odd and far from home to read, at the same time, of bank clerks' unions securing annual increases of \$15,000,000 and Peterborough Cathedral celebrating its 800th anniversary!

Good night!

## CHAPTER II

### BY THE SMELTERS AND STOVES OF SOUTH WALES

Cardiff, South Wales,  
Tuesday, July 6, 1920.

THE day has refused a job, but it has given a very weary pair of legs,—also a full pair of ears and eyes, not to mention a mind full of the satisfaction of getting closer to the summer's quarry because closer to the fiery fronts of open-hearths, charging-machines, cinder pits, "stoves," and such-like old friends.

The train was fast and the third-class compartment car very comfortable for the three hours' trip—quite without any real need, I'd say, of the support of the large glasses of whiskey taken by the two middle-aged ladies and their gentleman relative. At the station here we waited for the policemen to bring somebody along, and behold, King Manuel of Portugal, handsome and smiling, with an extremely stylish young lady! How they happened to be here I'll have to wait until the morning paper to find out. The crowd evidently had no idea who they were.

"Aye, they're 'and charged, all right. That's why we 'as our job," the rough and dust-covered worker I sat down beside in the public house answered my inquiry about the three blast-furnaces visible from where we sat. He was a member of a union, getting something over four pounds a week and evidently doing the hardest kind of work up on the cupola. He was drinking his third great pint of ale and stoutly refusing the urgings of his chum to 'ave another, because of his trip to Bristol some years ago, when the

party went to see a "pantomime"—"they wuz 'av'n' a good time over there in them days, you see"—got to drinking whiskey, forgot about the pantomime, got half-way back to the station—"and from then on I cawn't recollect a single thing except that I woked up in bed back 'ome—and don't like wiskee never since."

On his strong suggestion I went boldly over to ask for the Irish-American in charge of the furnaces, and on my second go found it easy to get into the plant (about 12,000 men) past the policeman. By assuming the independence urged by my barroom friend, I sauntered coolly along past the gas producers and found myself standing again on an open-hearth floor and talking to an old first helper ("first hand" here). He had been a puddler back in the Calumet district around Chicago, had seen the tonnage rate for puddling fall from fourteen shillings to six shillings six pence hapenny, left it and was now happy in his dignity as the boss of his furnace and earning around ten pounds a week.

"We calls these furnaces smelters or melters 'ere. No, they's not water-cooled doors—ye see, these furnaces are twenty-five years awld and more and only forty-ton size. That chargin'-machine there was the first laid down in South Wales, years and years ago, of a Wellman patent—(Cleveland, U. S. A!) Down farther there ye'll find a Talbot furnace, as good as any—holdin' 175 tons and over here ye'll see a first-class pit."

Sure enough the pit was orderly as could be; the floor was a fearful mess and the furnaces most forlorn looking. Altogether it made me glad that when I finally found the man in charge he was "full up" and could offer no job. The rate of two shillings one penny per hour seemed good for the easy shovelling the labor gang was doing on the Talbot, which had fallen in after a good long service.

The boss is a shrewd-looking young Welshman who



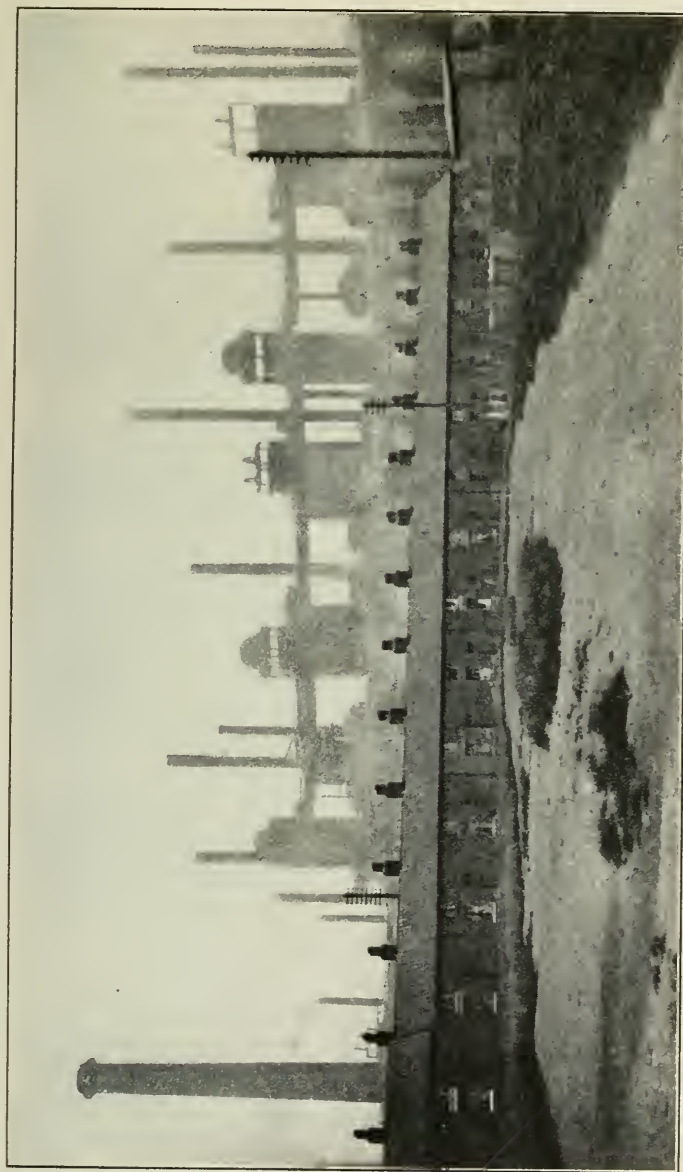
seemed more than willing to swap information about English steelmaking for the same about American. He seems to have the highest regard for the unions into which a worker must go as soon as he is promoted up out of the "general labor" gang. ("We mustn't say 'common labor' since the war.") "They keep their agreements with satisfaction and are quite reasonable.

"The twelve-hour day? Well, you wouldn't find anybody in the country—employer or employee—who would be willing to go back to it, not even on a temporary basis. No, no, that was too long. . . . No, I can't say that we have fewer spills or accidents since the change, but we never did have 'em often here, anyway. But everybody's happier. Of course you fellows'll come to it. But I notice that your costs are getting up very fast. Well, we're getting ready to catch up with you chaps and pass you. We've got some distance to go, I grant you, but we're getting ready to go fast—with that Talbot, for instance, when she's goin' right she certainly puts out the steel—and we're putting in more, with a big mixing furnace soon. Ten thousand tons a week, that's what we're after."

He was much interested in my account of our tar guns at Stackton, natural gas, etc., and was very unhappy at the present low quality of coal coming from the company's collieries a few miles away.

The man from America in charge of as tumble-down a collection of blasts and "stoves" as could be imagined, is also sure the eight-hour day is coming in America. The old way is too long, everybody is persuaded here, especially when the work is as hard and dirty and continuous as on a "floor" or around the "stoves." Everybody here has a maximum of forty-seven hours, with some only forty-four, though the laborers often get week-end work at time and a half which puts their earnings well beyond five pounds. Every third week all are required to take a double turn of





BLAST-FURNACES OF THIS HAND-CHARGED TYPE ARE NOW BEING REPLACED BY MACHINE-CHARGED FURNACES OF NEWER AND LARGER TYPE.

The residents in the homes near by find the location very dirty.



sixteen hours in order to allow their shift to come each week at a different period of the twenty-four.

Both these gentlemen seem to feel well pleased with the way the "ton workers" "put their backs to their jobs" in the shorter day. "First hands in some places where things are working right are getting their twenty to thirty pounds every week." But the day or time workers are making them very unhappy by their easy-going methods ever since the war. "Why, they're putting up plants to-day covering twice the space but designed for the same output—just because these chaps can't be made to work except by a tonnage rate—and how can you do that with the 'general laborers'?"

Over in the river were numerous boats unloading cargoes of 1,700 tons or thereabouts of ore from Bilbao, Spain, or from South African fields. Four men (in place of a usual six) were doing a wondrous fine job of shovelling the heavy stuff into a small bucket holding about a ton. This another man lifted with a hydraulic winch according to the directions of another man who lay on some tarpaulins and yelled mutterings to "Lower!" or "Haul away!" and then bore it over to a little railway car built for twenty tons (!) where still another man unloosed it—altogether an extremely wasteful use of man-power, so far as the eye could judge. Some of the ships seemed to be using "clam-shells." A boy said they could not be used to "grab" up this particular kind of ore, and that the gang of men working through the twenty-four hours could unload by their shovels about 400 tons. To my surprise, I learned that these men below were working only three and a half hours per day, though even then they were lifting the extremely heavy stuff so fast and sweatily that they were earning six "quid" a week. The boy loosing the bucket earned only two pounds, two shillings.

"Well, ye see, we're all ex-service men and we've been

taken on only because everybody's asked to give us jobs. So we work only while the other regular gangs on longer hours are eatin', or in between their shifts. Of those four down inside, all are too old to take the regular turns except one. A man has to be an ox to shovel that stuff for ten hours, and then he's an old man at thirty-five—with the help of booze. I'm twenty—after two years and ten months in the army. And I come home to find nothing to do! That's all a 'grateful king and country' can do! And down the dock there you'll find a lot o' Chinks and 'niggers' doin' a man's work on the boats just because they'll do it a little cheaper, y' understand?

"No, I couldn't learn a trade because my old man he 'went out,' you know, and we all had to dig in. Here you can't get a skilled job unless you got a pocket full o' papers—that's what the unions of your mates do for you. Years of work, they mean, these certificates of indenture, years of work at five or six shillings the week! No, it's a rotten old country to go through hell for—and to lose two of your brothers for. Nobody cares for the workin' man nowadays."

As I walked out I met a black-faced coal handler whose greatest complaint was of his fellow workers reported to be lying down on their job in South Wales mines.

"If these miners cawn't do the work to get out the coal, they should get out of the collieries and let somebody else in. Without us 'avin' the coal 'ere to send out, we cawn't get no work on the docks ter do, yer see. That's the bane av this work. Yer never know one day to another whether ye 'ave a job or not. Ye go down and 'ave a look 'round to see where you're goin' to 'ave a chawnce, and if a gang gets together the mon comes along and simply takes a half dozen or dozen of us as we 'appen to come. 'Twould seem to me the finest kind o' world thot ony mon could want—to get up outa bed in the mornin' and know a job was witin' for ye!

"I fair worry meself near sick every day to know 'ave I a job or no. 'Twould be wort' a good pound a week less to 'ave somethin' steady like. . . . The out-of-work money? Well, it's not much—fifteen shillin' a pay (week) and ye must give hours to signin' the book every day, when ye might be tryin' to find work. An' if ye take a day's job and then don't find another fer the rest o' the fortnight, y' understand, then ye cawn't get yer thirty shillins.' That's the law—no money except for the whole fortnight out o' work. No, I don't bother about it; only the undersirables do—or the old uns. Sickness money? Well, that's only fifteen bob too; that's not much nowadays, but it's a lot when ye're sick and got nothin'!"

He was happy in a new job and a fairly steady one for the time being, as fireman for a cold-storage plant on the dock. As we got off the car to walk down the street, he apologetically stopped into an alley to untie the strings around his trousers just under his knees. "I'd forgot all about them, you know. They keep a man's trousers from getting under his feet." Very carefully he turned them up to keep them off the ground, a process which would have worn them out at the bottom much faster than if tied, or, after the manner of most workers, strapped, at the knee.

When at several hotels they told me, one after another, they were "full up," I wondered whether it was because of my three days' beard. I hardly blamed them. Later I have had the pleasure of sitting here in the parlor of a "temperance hotel" and hearing the proprietor tell some inquirer every few minutes up till now—11.30 P. M.—the same thing—"Full up, full up; not a free bed in the 'ouse." I'm in only because the bed of a regular boarder is not working while he's on a holiday. How many others besides himself have used it since his departure I don't know, but, judging from the looks of the —— no, it's not linen, that's sure!—I could guess it was several. No, the bed is



not changed during the week—or, perhaps the fortnight. Judging from the appearance of the landlord, however, I'll gamble the beds are uninhabited, anyway—and that's something. He is young, but has been a seaman for nearly twenty years.

"After getting hit by torpedoes three times and missed twice, I promised the old lady I was fed up on sea-farin' and would settle down as soon as the war was over, d' ye see? So here I am. D' ye think, sir, that those two gentlemen and their wives were respectable people? I try to stand in with the police and never accept any man and woman that drives up in a taxi, never. But it's hard to know whether your judgment's right oftentimes. You know how it is, sir."

Which reminds me that the majesty of the law gave me a rather curdly moment this afternoon. As I sat in the "pub" a young, thin-faced fellow of nervous build sat down quickly beside me and whispered something very hurriedly about "this book 'ere" as he shoved a small blue tablet and lead-pencil under me, then as hurriedly stood up to the bar with a manifestly nonchalant expression. I came to a quick understanding of it all an instant later. Two policemen entered the room! I had a quick picture of the embarrassment of explaining to them what I was doing with the aforesaid book. Instinctively I reached for my pocket to see if I had anything by which I could prove my real identity, and realized keenly the disadvantages of living a double life. But they passed both my nervous friend and all the rest of us—including a nervous American—and the book was soon back in its owner's pocket. It seems that being a "bookie" is against the law, but they are extremely numerous for all that—with many bets placed in their hands in lavatories and such places. There are dozens of publications which are read zealously by most of the workers for their "dope" on "Silver Badge" or "Shin-



ing Star." Some of my educated friends there in London tell me it comes close to being the national vice and flourishes among the women as well as the men of all classes.

I surely feel a long, long way even from those friends I left back there in the East End in London—and so extremely distant from the good friends back in clean, bright, hopeful America that—well, the less I think about that, the better for my happiness at this moment.

And now it's up two flights to the room of the "attic simplicity" we used to talk about in Greek architecture—only this is spelled with a small "a"—there to "wrap the drapery of my couch about me as one who lies down to pleasant dreams"—I don't think!

Swansea, S. Wales,  
Wednesday, July 7, 1920.

"First off" I want to apologize for the aspersions I cast on that room of the "attic simplicity." In the first place it gave me a perfectly good night's sleep in spite of its ball-wadded pillow and mattress. In the second place, it was miles higher up the hill of respectability than where I sit now with my tablet on my knee, writing with the aid of the fading daylight at nine o'clock.

Hotel after hotel was "full up," until I felt lucky to get any place at all, especially at a public house bearing the appetizing name of "Leg of Lamb." But with the painted sign the appetizing idea comes to its finish—its sad finish. When the barmaid assigned me to "number ten" I blithely asked for the key and was told that it was "quite all right" without it. A little later I brought my heavy bag up the stairs to find in my supposedly private room four of the dirtiest and smelliest mattresses and cots it has been my lot to see in a long time—those four and nothing more! I have just made a careful inspection for the cleanest of the four, but the prospect is not good with

even the best. The girl has just told me that already two others are booked up for the room, and the last applicants I noticed were particularly bum-like. It surely makes a poor prospect for the night. Still it all goes, I suppose, with the bed I've chosen to lie on for the summer, so I can't complain. Only it does not make a pleasant prospect after a day of tramping about in my old clothes through the mud and rain of what looks like an extremely busy factory district up and down the Swansea valley.

My companions in the hostelry—and presumably my roommates for the night—are interesting. On the whole, they represent the lowest platform of “disrespectability” I've come close to since the down-and-out “stiffs” or “regulars” of the Boston-Liverpool cattle boats of the college vacations twenty years ago. The one I spoke to first there in the back or special and private room of the public house I took for an American. He is English in spite of fifteen years of running from one casual job in lumber-camps and elsewhere between New York and Portland, Oregon. At this moment I am undecided what he is. During the afternoon and evening he has grown constantly drunker, and his stories of his various accomplishments steadily more vivid. I guess he's a deck-hand on a trawler which goes out for fish, when he is not absorbing whiskies—eight at last accounts to-day—and beers, about ten pints so far, with another hour's run still to make before closing time at ten. A respectable and hard-working young Welshman who is keeping him company carefully stated that he has no pride in it, but:

“To-day already I've 'ad about fifteen pints, and now—mind ye, I don't sye it to boast, but merely to state God's truth—before I go to bed at eleven, I'll have without doubt—and it's not boasting at all, I am, y' oonderstawnd—without doubt, twenty more! No, and it will not be a-mykin' me at all out av me 'ead at all. Ye see, I likes the stuff and the stuff do seem, as ye might sye, to like me.”

That was about five o'clock. A little while ago he was progressing satisfactorily with his programme—except that, judging from his all-inclusive friendliness to the gentlemen assembled and his repeated successes in kissing Sarah, the barmaid, I'd say he was fairly well intoxicated. It has been quite hard to sit and talk with the trawler man and a young and intelligent-looking miner while our friend has been boasting loudly near by, and two young boys at another table have been entreating a young friend to: "Come on, Jack, 'ave a little tea and then we'll all carry on. Now that's a good bye."

To which Jack, with his head on the table, murmurs incoherently about the pain in his head or else gets rid of his overload of alcohol by vomiting on the floor—without the slightest notice from barmaids or others!

Altogether about the lowest party it has ever seemed necessary for me to sit in.

"No," says the trawler man, "if you ask me I'll tell you that even my mother wasn't sorry to see me go 'way from the house—the fine house—there in London where she and my brothers live. And of course *they* weren't. They can't 'get' me—not they. And I can't 'get' them, not them. Well, you see, I've got to have the stuff—I get drunk every day I'm on shore and there's no way out of it. And then my nerves are all shot and I have to take a dose or two of some dope to get some sleep. Not a dope fiend, y' understand. No, sir, not by a long shot. And if I could get back to the States I'd get some money—a hundred and fifty dollars—I got in a bank there and never come back to this — island. Why any man like you should come over here I don't know. Over there any Chink will give a down-and-outer a sandwich and here they put him in jail."

The strange thing is that he has none of the appearance of a down-and-outer, his face being as tanned and strong looking and his eye as straight as one could wish.

"I fink I'll not stay long in Swansea," says a pathetic-looking lad in the shabbiest of coats, a torn shirt, and bedraggled soft collar—in a language which I have seen quoted but never heard before. "I don't want Swansea (don't like it) and that's God's trufe. No, I'm never touch-in' of the stuff. I 'ave me 'character' right 'ere in me pocket—'of gude character, sober and indoostrious' it sye, 'sober and indoostrious'—and I'm not for the los-in' o' it, you know, no more nor anyfink. In furniture, I am. We was paid to-day—six quid; so I 'ave bought me a suit—'ere, ye can see the waistcoat. It's second-'and, but i' God's trufe, brawnd-new. Free (three) pound eighteen I paid for it. I'll 'ave it on me in the morning, I will, if nofink 'appens."

"Of one hundred men ye'll meet 'ere in South Wales—at least among the colliers (miners)," says the white-collared Mr. Powell, who admits with some pride that he has worked his years "inside" and is now the local president or chairman of the miners' union in a near-by colliery, "Of one hundred of them 'ere ye'll find nine and ninety Socialists. We want an end put to private profit and we want more coal got out for the people. Ye see, 'tis like this—do ye folly me?—'ere must be twenty yards left this side the boundary of a private property and then twenty yards the other side—that's forty good yards left below that the country will need—and that the country could 'ave, d' ye see? if 'twas government done. Then if there's a fall in an entry, the chawnces are that the masters will leave it lie while they goes on into another part—and that fall and the coal behind it never gets out in this world."

"May I interrupt you? Will you permit me 'ere to sye," says the colliery clerk of the thirty pints going on thirty-five, "that I'm a-fearin' we mye not be so 'appy with nashul'-zation—I can't sye it quite correct, gentlemen; it's a 'ard word fer a sober man and I ahm still sober! The colliers

mye not like government operation for themselves, I sye, but it's God's truth that the shot-fire-men—I wuz one fer many years, I wuz—the shot-fire-men, they ought to be paid by the gov'ment. Because mony times I've fired shots, so 'elp me, I 'ave, w'ere I took big chawncees for blowin' everybody oop. Now gov'ment shot-fire-men would not tyke chawncees. And that's God's truth, it is, gent'men."

"We 'ave figures to show," says the red-haired union official, "that the owners—the masters—in this district make a good 18/6 per ton. We colliers get fer a ton o' coal two shillin'; we buy it from the company for our own use for six and six. The public pays over two pounds! That's w'y we're not workin'. Too much profit."

"Yes, I know the telegraff is government operated and 'tis not good. And 'ere's a case to prove yer p'int, sir. Last mont' I got a tellygram at seven o'clock that me brother'd sent at nine that mornin'—'e bein' four mile aways from me. On account of the delaye, ye see, I 'ad to take a trap at twelve shillin' sixpence, bein' as all the trines wuz gone. The next dye the girl confesses 'twas 'er fault and awks me not to sye nothin'—w'ich I promises to do if she pyes me twelve bob and sixpence w'ich I'd paid for the trap, y' oonderstawnd?—w'ich she did."

A fairly canny Welshman—I submit—probably with a whiff of Scotch ancestry!

During the day I asked a worker how about the coal men's holding up business at the ports: the objection of my black-faced docker friend of yesterday was supported by a morning paper's statement of increased cost of living 131 per cent, increased wages of miners 155 per cent, with increased wage cost per ton of coal produced, 267 per cent. His answer was as immediate as it was definite:

"Wull, wot about all the bloody profits av the thievin' mawsters, hye? Them as sets in their silks and satins somer's down in London and never r'ises a bloody 'awnd ter



do a dye's work! W'ye should the colliers break their bawcks ter pile up the pounds for thum?"

"It's little enough worrk there is, aroond 'ere in the port," said a laborer waiting in the rain. "And, God strike me dead, uf it eyent nothin' but a bluudy go of the mawsters ter brike the unions! 'Now's the time!' that's w'at they're syin', all of 'um. Strike me, but it mikes me sick ter see the wye all these bluudy Welshmen believe every bleedin' word Llide George syes to 'um. And the king!—wull, I never lays eyes on 'im and never wants to, but from 'is pictures I'll sye 'e looks like nothin' but a bluudy imbecyle, God strike me! I'm fair fed up on this country, I am."

I took some supergreasy "'am and eggs" in a supergreasy and dirty coffee-house in the hope of further conversations, but in vain. Through the rain I got out to a nest of big steel and tin-plate works, going on from there to a plant still farther up the beautiful valley to which I had been referred as one of the biggest makers of tin plate in England. I found the new "welfare man" in charge of a neat-looking small building of restaurants, lavatories and first-aid. He apparently gives most attention to the town's boy scouts—all the town's families which cover the valley's sides are the "works' families." He hopes to help me see his superior Friday. Whether it will be possible or wise for even the boss to let an unidentified stranger into the fold of the little community and its suspicions of outsiders and their sharing of the community's limited supply of jobs, appears, according to the welfare man, to be a serious question.

Anyway, I'll hope. Hope, that's the word to take with me into one of those dreadful beds—after I go down and see how my pals, drunk and sober, are prospering downstairs.



Thursday Night,  
July 8th,  
Swansea.

The committee can certainly report progress!

The trawler man was far gone and claimed to be making barrels of money from covert sales of a drug that "will cure every d—— disease you ever heard of, and more." That bank-account is now reported at \$350! The master of the thirty-five pints was singing, toasting everybody in sight and kissing Sarah every second time she passed him, though still claiming that no amount of beer affected him. In further evidence of what the modern psychologists would probably call his highly active though somewhat temporary and unstable "superiority complex" he was relating and re-relating how:

"Me brother-in-law been a bookie, y' understawnd! Well, on the very day o' the rice 'e wires me the tip. So I tikes 10 pounds—awnd I gets me me 330! Of course when I leaves the plice, I 'ad only three of them left on me, awnd I was a bit unsteady like. But all me friends been 'appy—I'll say that for them—awnd for meself, too. 'Ere, Miss! a pint o' mild all round! 'Yes,' I say to meself, 'I'll take this tip fer once!' Me brother-in-law bein' a bookie, ye see, awnd mikin' a cool fifty thousand on it, too"—etc., etc., to the accompaniment of many a "Wull now!" or "I sye!" from the admiring and envious crowd of us about him.

"Before the war I wuz a good mon and never cared for this stuff," a young man assured me when the publican had refused to give him a bed without seeing his money. "But if ye've money and respect yerself, let me tell you to keep aways from the army, and from liquor."

Sarah, of the gentle face, very certainly, I regret to report, gave a pronounced "hic" with her "yes" when I asked about leaving my bag in the kitchen instead of taking it up to the alleged bedroom.

Up in the "dormitory" I joined my sleeping pals by getting into the one empty bed—not the one I had picked as the least shocking. After I had removed my shoes and laid my coat inside the covers where I could keep my hand on it, I tried to keep my imagination from following too far back into the past of the inescapable smell of bum carried by the dirty blanket—nor too far forward into the night. Strangely enough, nothing kept any of us awake except the ominous coughings of the old man. In the morning it was possible to take a wash and a shave in the public lavatory where a worker advised me that "Yer cawn get every sort of job in Birmingham. In the Tyre Works I mykes ten quid a week, now that I can turn out good tyres." I helped turn up the sleeves of two one-armed near-bums—the lavatory's keeper was also one-armed. I noticed that they seemed to feel as much as any one could the indecency of their unshaved faces. Later, the worker refused my offer of razor with "Thanks, but I wouldn't want another to use mine, so I wouldn't use yours. This country's too full o' disease."

The view-point of the miners hereabouts is said to hit closely on the troubles which American boats are having in obtaining cargoes of coal. Their waits often run up to 45 day of demurrage cost at, sometimes, \$600 per day! The waits now average  $24\frac{1}{2}$  days. Some coal "masters" have told close friends of enormous war profits: "In two weeks we made enough from our export coal to equal an ordinary year's profits." Another told of pre-war wage costs of 11 shillings per ton, post-war 38 shillings, with post-war export price of 105 shillings (\$26). That would make the red-haired collier's statement of 18/6 of profit seem mild. Local house coal sells at 60 shillings (\$12) per ton with an additional 50 cents for putting into the cellar. On the other hand, the papers give reports of, for instance, 1,200 miners out of 2,000 as paying income tax on 10 pounds a week.

An American official from a near-by port is very thoughtfully on his job, which involves, in turn, the whole matter of other people's jobs.

"The American sailor expects all the comfort of home on board ship. Several lately complained to me of having eggs for breakfast only twice a week. I have had to tell them how we've not had eggs twice a quarter at my home. At fourpence each, I can't afford it—I guess it's because I work in your collier friend's nationalized industry! All that the Chambers of Commerce and the other commercial interests have persuaded our employer—Uncle Sam—to do, is to increase our wages by twenty-nine per cent since pre-war!

"So far almost no Americans are going to sea. Seldom will a crew of fifty show as many as ten born or naturalized Americans. . . . No, the LaFollette Act simply says that twenty-five per cent must know enough to understand ordinary English commands:—it says nothing about American citizenship. Then Article 1 lets even that go by saying that in foreign ports a captain can fill vacancies with anybody he can get of equal or better standing as sailors. So to-day here an American boat is paying off its Americans and also paying their wages, fare, and subsistence back to the original port where booked, taking on Chinese here in their places for a run into the Orient,—and saving money."

Like practically all officials I've ever seen of the same type, he is hard-worked, with assistants promised but still lacking, with facts hard to get in what claims to be the metallurgical centre of the world.

Partly because from where I stood she could not see my rough-looking trousers, a landlady gave me a room to-day at a better hotel, where the sheets are not changed over-often, but nevertheless infinitely better than the "Leg of Lamb."

Have been inquiring about tin-plate works which are reported to be practically household affairs and to use waterwheels, but so far in vain.

Have just found that the collier on vacation is, according to schedule, well toward his thirty-ninth pint and drunk enough to be boasting that "The proprietor—'e's a friend of mine, y' understawnd—'e 'as promised me two drinks av brawndy after closin' time at ten to-night." He also speaks with a combination of manly pride and due emotion of his having had seven children and lost five, the two remaining living with his father.

"Not till me money roons out," he says when you ask how soon he goes back to work.

Friday, July 9,  
Swansea.

A fine combination of trains, buses, and a lot of walking between the beautifully patterned and verdant hills up to the plant and the welfare worker for the hoped-for job as "general labor."

"Now that you've asked me," the owner said, "I must refuse in order not to appear to be spying on my men. Otherwise, I'd have had no objections." The trouble is that as a bum I'd have had no chance with any of his officials without his O. K. It's hard luck, but I hope not typical.

The head of the committee made up of representatives of the six unions in the plant, whom the owner then arranged for me to see, was most worth while—a middle-aged capable, well-spoken clear-eyed Welshman, properly proud of his having worked up in thirty years to his position in charge of the teeming or pouring of all the steel into the ingot moulds in the "pit" of the "smelting shop" or open-hearth department (at about nine or ten pounds per week).

"Entirely right you are," he interjected, quick as a flash, when I said I believed that men's attitudes toward pol-

itics and almost everything imaginable were largely the result of their job and its conditions. "We 'ave mony Socialists 'ere, sir, but they don't work at it, as ye might say. 'Tis because of the friendly relations between the owners 'ere and all av us men—with never 'ardly anything that cannot be straightened out. Now down at Briton's Ferry I've always said the best supporter of the Independent Labor Party is a certain employer who's always calling it names and knockin' it about. As long as 'e does so every worker knows 'e ought to be for it, that unpopular 'e is.

"The most trouble we 'ave 'ere is from the engineers unions and such, that get their orders from outside of steel. Everthing else we can generally settle on—and usually win—with the masters. The tin-plate workers are now asking for a six-hour turn and fifty per cent hourly increase—with tonnage rates on the cold rolls, not box rates. But mony workers, especially if they're Marxians, don't want piece rates. Here we're mostly on six-hour turn—in the sheet mill—but we can't find enough men to run full. In the smelting shop where the job is irregular we've been on eight hours so long I can 'ardly remember the long turns. In between, the boys will play cards—and I'm wanting a room near by where they can do it and be 'andy when wanted—with mebbe meals served there, seein' that almost nobody comes 'ere to the canteen (restaurant). Just as nobody ever comes to the first-aid room 'ere.

"Safety work we don't 'ave, and what they call 'welfare' is only just starting in the country. We've all been too busy talkin' wages, wages. But now we're seeing that more wages is impossible unless the masters will do away with some of their obsolete works. . . . Yes, two drinkin' fountains we 'ad, a long time ago, and the boys stole 'em, so we never 'ad 'em since. . . . Yes, wages and hours we've been getting. Better conditions must come



next—right 'ere we 'ave some of the most democratic employers in all England, I will say, but a very, very old shop and equipment."

The metallurgist says any outsider in the village attracts stares and other attentions for months—most unpleasantly—also that an Englishman is hardly less foreign than an American. Outside the technical men like himself who have to be taken where found, the better jobs here in Wales are supposed to be pretty jealously taken by Welshmen, with the lowest jobs of "general labor" left to the Irish and the English! He finds the ease with which any and all of the workers can get to the owners over the department heads trying; with the head melter likely to refuse point-blank to make steel any other way than what "is the wye we been doin' it for ten year." He says the union representatives make a welfare man rather needless in the matter of wage rates and industrial relations generally, so that he mainly looks out for the youths at a very considerable salary. A very clean-cut, high-minded chap the metallurgist seems, with rather a surprisingly friendly disposition toward government service because of the much greater security of the civil-service job than one with private employers. Which reminds me that the best educated of university young men in London spoke of the very stiff exams given by the government for assigning the highest winners to London "berths," the next best to the provinces like India, Egypt, etc. . . . "They pay as much as 350 to 400 pounds (\$1,750-\$2,000) with small increases each year—which is very good, you know."

All of which appears to mean that the job constitutes over here a form of property which is immensely more important than at home—so much so that once obtained it is little likely to be given up as blithely as with us, and considerably more likely to be passed down to the children like a piece of land. Apparently, too, the unions have



pretty much succeeded in exercising at least as much control as "the masters" over the job so as to give the individual holder of it the utmost assurance of security which market conditions will permit. The foreman's right to discharge without the approval of the union doesn't seem to exist at all, at all.

"At Port Talbot, ye'll find a brand-new smelting shop. I'd try it if I was you," advised a young English worker who was complaining of the old-fashionedness of the works with its tumble-down equipment, its little, numbered tin cups in which it was handing out the weekly pay of about \$40,000, and its general air of being a small-town, family party for sitting tight on the best jobs against all outsiders from such foreign ports as America, England, etc!

Swansea,  
Sunday, July 11.

It's a sordid picture yesterday gave of this district's working and community life. It will be worth a lot of discomfort to see if the two parts of that picture are the blood relatives of cause and effect, and if so, how.

After an hour of the train's waiting, changing, and moving I "got down" at Llanelly—(pronounced by the Welsh somewhat as though spelled "Klanecklay"—the "KI" comes from putting the tongue to the roof of your mouth and going like a gander)—famous as another centre of the tin-plate industry. While getting an extra half-sole on my shoes, the cobbler and a caller did the honors:

"Me fawther worked at B—— in Indiana, for some years right after the McKinley tariff began to bring the sheet and tin-plate mills here to a standstill, and to take the workers away from here to America by the thousands. He brought us back with him when I was twelve. He's a roller boss now and wants to stick, though me mother'd start back to-morrow, and so would I. It's all class here.

A boy that's a clerk won't see you when you're on the street, though he will when you're on the job—and no common worker ever breaks into college here—though I am goin' to night school this winter.

"If a man don't drink in the pubs there's nothin' to do at all—except the movies. We're teetotallers now. Lots o' the boys come back from the army drinkin' more than ever before—regular wasters they are now, a disgrace to their old friends."

"Awnd uf they don't dr-r-ink," put in the cobbler as he ate the bread and fried fish his wife had brought him, "then they dr-r-ess. I'm not fer mykin' more money thon to get me lodgins and meals, awnd I don't like to see such spendin's and carryin's on as some of the army byes—Aye, I notice that if they go wye to America, they stawnd up better with their chist out—fifty per cent better than before. I fancy 'tis because they 'awve the chawnce ter be more monly and independent thon 'ere."

"Well, you've better education, there," added the boy again, "and education is what the working man needs. Still, what's the use of it where I am if never can a worker get into the offices and responsibility? My brother stayed in school for years longer than I and he comes up this week for his captaincy exam. If only some 'un had made me stay in school! But I wanted to earn money. I wanted to be a man!

"Say, how'd you like to see the place where I work?"

It was almost too good to be true—thus to have a guide right into the mills. He said it was the biggest of its kind in the town, but it had only a few fairly small single mills for small sheets which could be put from the back door into sailing boats direct for Liverpool. It was surprising to see all the "opening," or separating of the rolled-together sheets done by girls equipped with leather hand holds with pieces of lead where they separated the corners.

They worked fast and seemed to find slight use for knives. Almost none of the rollers, including the "heaver-over" or "behinder," as they call the catcher who returns the sheets to the roller or "rougher," and the finishers or "dockers," seemed to use any gloves—and to date I've seen no canvas gloves anywhere.

"They won't believe me when I tell about their changing rolls in a half-hour or so in America. Here it takes ten or twelve hours—the Gantry crane doesn't seem equipped for it. The union heads of the steel workers, the engineers, steam and electricity men, and two or three others work everything out with the manager—he's a 'washout' that everybody hates. If two men fight they lose their job. That sometimes happens because the rule about bringin' in beer is practically not enforced since the war, so anybody can get it. But outside o' that, *I don't know anybody that's ever been fired around 'ere since I came.* A man gets his job and sticks to it, generally. Every roller boss manages his men, too, with almost nothing for the master to say, though the roller don't pay 'em here as in some places. If we have any complaints we go to our roller boss and he goes to the union head, who goes to the chairman of their committee and if it ain't yet straightened out, he goes to the manager."

No drinking-fountains nor any signs of sanitary or safety matters were evident. The crane was very busy, but engine, equipment, and building were all in poor condition. The "washout" came up to us but gave no sign. There was no gate policeman. So we walked calmly into another plant where small rolls were handling very small sheets with a great crowd of girls about fifteen and sixteen years old—earning about thirty or forty shillings—separating them, sorting and packing quite vigorously. Here they had an ancient engine of the old upright or vertical vintage.

"When they want to oil it, they have to stop it—and

they do about three times a turn," my guide said. One of the workers said he had worked some years in Youngstown. It certainly seemed an old-time plant, with the necessity of considerable "engineering revision" before more wages or more comfort and efficiency would be easy for the employers on anything but a "seller's market" ready to pay high for its goods.

Altogether the town, with a large part of its workers going black-faced through the dirty streets or into its dingy shops for the high-priced but second-rate foods displayed, gave, I must say, a bad impression. It seemed unbelievable that it could claim over 30,000 souls. I was glad to get away, though sorry to part from my attractive young worker and the older and more serious cobbler—the latter was properly proud of his having sold "almost tons av roobber 'eels—awnd Ah've fifty pounds' worth a-comin' in now."

Both confirmed the stories that the Welsh look down upon the English. For one thing "Wales was Wales before England was England—when William the Conqueror subdued the English, he merely drove the Welsh back into these mountains and let them alone—he couldn't subdue us." Both are little hopeful of getting out of their group, but seem to feel slight bitterness and think little Socialism about it.

Back in town here, was glad to find many magazines and quite a few readers in the public library. After supper the streets were jammed. Before dark I took courage to go down what is called the Strand, where murders are said to be frequent. I saw more male and female wrecks of humanity, drunk and sober, with dirty children about them, than ever in my life. One middle-aged woman was singing when she wasn't swearing, while another old hag scarcely three feet high had to bend her neck wofully from a fearful crook in her back in order to let the passer-by see her

horrid puffy cheeks and her chin covered by an inch-long yellow beard! Policemen have orders never to come down here except in twos.

Up on the main streets every so often—and with increasing frequency as the evening grew—the crowd would gather to see a drunken brawl or to let the police trundle away on a two-wheeled stretcher some dead-drunk worker. It gave me a shock to see one drunken woman step out of a pub to browbeat her sober husband for money. When she got it she re-entered the saloon to get still drunker, while her husband walked on shamefacedly. At about eleven nearly every young man that passed me at the upper end of the main street was reeling, if he wasn't singing drunkenly or explaining: "Ah'm a-goin' 'ome to me mother (hic)—me lovin' mother—it's 'er that's waitin' fer me noo (hic)."

"Oi'm a-lovin' o' that mon in there! It's 'e thot gov me this!" screamed a drunken hag, pointing in to the pub and disclosing a bottle of whiskey under her indescribably filthy coat.

About the only sober people during the later hours after pub-closing at ten seemed to be the numerous young girls talking to the boys and "ta-ta"-ing their young and mostly unsteady friends good night. Singing and reeling along would come whole platoons of boys and young men helping to hold each other up. The streets were filled with the sound of singing of either the groups on the sidewalk or in the chars-à-bancs. (These are huge trucks fitted with rows of seats for as many as thirty or fifty persons. At low rates they run holiday trips in every direction, evidently with great success, in spite of the serious accidents caused often by the drivers taking too great advantage of the frequent stops at the roadside pubs.) But for all the music, the impression from the combined reports of ear and eye is not one of a happy people.



"In the army, sure we got rum in winter three times a day," my trawler man explained earlier in the evening, "with a special dose before every action. The Germans were always drunk when they came over—and I've seen hundreds of their beer bottles on their battle-fields. Of course, the English navy has booze, too."

I induced him and a drunken friend, who also blames the army for his taste for drink and also for making his home town too dull, to take a walk so as to get away from the constant: "Fill 'em up again, miss!—two pints o' mild and a half pint o' bitters!" It was worth while to see the trawler man straighten up with the pride of his job as he told us the fine points of one of his beloved trawlers as we stood on the dock above it.

"Here's where I know what I'm talkin' about, you betcher life! To hell with the British navy! 'Twas these trawlers won the war! They kept cleanin' up the sea for the bigger boats. Now, you see that? Well, that's how you pull the fish in and sort 'em. And there—the fish in that box everybody turns in and skins and then sells 'em to the low-down fried-fish joints—where I eat, too d—often, I'll say. And the money goes to the crew. And there, ye see that—" etc., etc.

"But there we was with them low-down foreigners," says our drunken partner as they head toward another pub, "and still they could talk more languages than we bloody English! Somethin's wrong, I tell you, with our education, or we wouldn't have to go to war to find how much we fellows here don't know."

"Well, I'm for the army," says the trawler man, "all except the bloody fightin'! But it's more education we all want—not more religion—more education, and better."

Yes, there's something good in such men. The surprising thing is how that something good seems to keep moving about in them more boldly when they're drunk



than when they're sober! "Oh, I sye, if only me mother, me poor mother, could see me now!" our third man kept saying oftener and oftener the drunker he grew.

But what I want to know is how far the job of earning a living in a factory town such as Llanelly or Swansea, and how far the job of fighting for their country in the army or navy, is responsible for these men and for such an unpleasant picture of degraded humanity as last night gave of Swansea, the cradle of the world's tin-plate industry.

Swansea,  
Monday, July 12, 1920.

Few days could crowd in more of information and opinion from a wide variety of standpoints than to-day. Such vibrating between the workers and the experts or "the knowers" gives a better understanding of the whole industrial problem than being just a worker. It is, of course, much more necessary where, as here, the view-points of both groups are equally unknown to a stranger.

One rather prominent citizen who has lived in America agreed that while many residents feel that drunkenness has considerably lessened, there is nevertheless an amount of it that is sickening to a newcomer. His daughter had to come to Swansea to see her first drunken man. The local chief constable here spent most of his evenings at the same hotel and usually walked out at closing time on very unsteady legs! The number is considerable, however, and increasing, he said, of teetotallers—they're called "tee-tees."

"What your working friends say about unsatisfactory education here is certainly true, I believe. The school books my children bring home are, I'm sure, away below, in printing, in contents, in method, the worst I had as a child, and far below what your children are doubtless enjoying now. Everybody tells me I must not think of sending them

to the 'board' or city school here, but to a boarding-school—it's called the public school, though it's very expensive and private—at the age of eleven. By George, I'll teach them myself before I'll let them go through that critical period of adolescence outside of our family circle. I don't care if that is the method among the best families here!"

Later I saw figures which told the tale of the trouble caused this district by the McKinley tariff. The thousands of hundredweights of tin plate shipped to America tumbled suddenly from five and six to one and two, commencing in 1896, the slump being made up gradually by increased shipments to Japan and other countries.

"The best thing that ever happened to us!" was the comment of an official of a manufacturer's group a few minutes later. "That McKinley tariff made us go out and sell our sheets to so world-wide a market that now nothing less than a world-wide disturbance could hurt more than a fraction of our present total trade. We used to be too dependent on one market—the American."

His ruddy face and forceful language show that he has been through the game of steel-making pretty much from the bottom—with some of the shortcomings as well as the strength of that experience, as when he added that "Well, no, we'll never be dry here because, you see, the workers near the furnaces simply can't get through their eight-hour turns, and shouldn't be expected to, without the extra stimulus and strength that comes from a couple of pints of beer."

That idea of alcohol as a food used to prevail at home; it appears to be very general here.

"The continuation schools have been authorized by Parliament, but every district has the liberty of voting the 'appointed day' which puts them into local operation. My group is to help the school authorities work out the local time and method by which the pupils are to get their

280 and 320 hours a year of schooling along with their work. It will probably take a long time before the additional space can be provided. Meanwhile, every employer having a certain number of boys of thirteen, or mostly fourteen, has to have a welfare man to provide them with sports, gyms, etc. No, we're not much in favor of classes in the works for anybody. You see, we must keep 'em all-round men—and no, there isn't a great deal of chance for the workers to get into the management.

"No, I don't think the Socialism of the worker chaps is very deep, but the big pound-a-day wages of the munitions workers and the large profits of the employers durin' the war has got 'em on edge and nobody is workin' hard now. 'W'y should we stand up 'ere and sweat our guts out before this bloody furnace for the mawster ter myke 'is pile!' That's the way they put it. And the miners that used to work twelve hours a day and lived like rats in a drain—well, they're trying to even up now by lying down on the job. Even at that, the majority is not for putting the mines over to the government, even though the leaders are. . . . But many of these things you'll be finding better in England, because most of our mines and steel plants here are pretty old-fashioned and backward."

"Never, never did we work all the twelve hours," a group of laborers assured me most strenuously a couple of hours later near the "jinnies" or regenerators—our "checker-chambers"—in a 2,000-man steel and tin-plate plant back in Llanelly where I walked boldly into the plant. "Of course we 'ad the twelve-hour shift—from six till six. But, of course, we 'ad a 'arf-hour awf fer breakfast and then an hour and a 'arf fer dinner—that mykes 10½ hours work. . . . But that's a long time ago."

Their disgust at the thought of twelve full hours of work daily was wonderful to behold—although they did seem to think extra hours after Saturday noon or on Sunday with

double pay were one of the advantages of their job as compared with that of the fourth hand or helper on the furnaces. That position is supposed to represent a promotion, but its regular hours with little chance at extra pay, they say, make some of them hesitate to accept it. This gang comes on duty at seven, takes a half-hour for breakfast about 8.30 and an hour for dinner at one and quits at 5.30 so as to get in forty-seven hours with a Saturday "'arf 'oliday." With a fair amount of extra hours they manage to get their six or, with better luck, seven pounds per week.

"In this coountry the members do run our unions, they do," one of the older men explains. "We elect our representatives of every 'local' to sit with the officers whilst they bargain with the owners, and these can veto the action of the officers when they know we won't stawnd fer some-thin'. . . . Aye, mon, uf a mon won't join the union after 'is fust pay, we chucks 'im oot and awf the job quick-like. An no mon'll tike the plice of a striker in another department. We do awll stawnd together, we do, and we 'as no 'black-legs' (scabs) amongst oos!"

They were sure enough a happy-go-lucky lot. They seemed to think they could go much farther before they would discourage the industrial goose from laying her golden eggs—and before they would be overpaid for work in the hot "checkers." There "soomtimes oor clothes do catch on fir're— Oh, aye! Awnd sometimes in the soakin' pits we 'as ter line up, joomp in, give six strokes with the sledge and joomp 'oot, quick-like, w'ilst another joomps in ter do the sime!"

Some of those I saw working about the hot ingots with the end of their sweat towels in their mouths were as hot as any men I've ever seen.

In the hot-mills where the sheet bar is rolled into the sheets, all seemed unhappy at the thought that laborers with the help of extra time could make more than they—



also very hopeful that the conference would get their demand for a six-hour turn, three additional helpers paid by the company and fifty per cent increase per hour!

"We used to slave 'ere on this job," said an expert "doubler" who, besides doubling the hot sheets together, also kept the fires and charged the furnace, "but now we're going to take it easy—and get more money. See?"

The troop of small boys and girls of thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen years, who put the small sheets through the cold rolls—called "greasers" and certainly looking the part—were as frisky and mischievous as could be imagined, but made a depressing sight none the less.

It is amazing to think of spending from noon till after eight o'clock thus talking with the workers without a word from the authorities. But from all reports these would, according to the current plant etiquette here, only put a question about me to a foreman. This foreman would himself perhaps be a member of a union and would think I was a friend of one of his pals and so probably tell the authority to mind his own business. Meanwhile I stood ready to ask for the gaffer, or foreman, and then for a job, though as long as I could get so close to the workers without it, it did not seem necessary to try too hard. In America the job was indispensable to the desired closeness to the workers.

"Oh, we've got the owners so scared here they don't trouble us, and it's just our good consciences that mykes us work at all, at all," said one. It looks as though he spoke the truth. It's a queer situation. The most hopeful thing about it is that the boys seem to take it all as rather a good joke. And now the evening paper adds its word:

"Not fit for pigs to live in—Llanelly District houses. The local doctor prescribes tents in preference to putting eight persons in two small rooms as he has found them in certain shacks long ago ordered destroyed. In the absence

of the tents he has asked places for the residents in the workhouse."

"Women police wanted for Llanelly . . . Lady R—and the local committee report that our streets are no longer fit for respectable women and girls to walk about," etc., etc.

It's worth calling a day!

Swansea,  
Tuesday, July 13.

All day I've been asking for work in this mill and that, getting the usual "Full up!" and then forgetting about it a moment later when the various workers have, as usual, started talking about their relatives in America and then, as usual, about their own jobs here.

"We' *awve* to be ter get 'em, yer see," chorussed three bright lads in a big plant more like a well-run American establishment than any yet seen, though many of its colossal rolls and cranes are German made. The boys were delighted to stop their work of cleaning out the "jinnies" when I asked them why, with all their advantages of security from the foreman's firing, their short hours and high wages, health and unemployment insurance, etc., they still cared to call themselves Sinn Feiners and Bolsheviks. "We 'awve ter be ter get 'em!" They could certainly roll off the regulation phrases about the "capitalist class," the "capitalist-kept press," etc., etc., and were extremely proud that they and their leaders had, by their strong-arm measures got "more wages and more power than the steel workers in any other part of the islands, bar none." "Llide George" is a "twister" who doesn't keep his promises, though still popular with the "chapel folk" (church people) who rule Wales. J. H. Thomas is no longer extreme enough to suit his railway union's constituency. The real power they respect most is the Triple Alliance of Miners, Railway, and Transport Workers. The King is "'armless



enough, but look at the money 'e spends on all the princes and the princesses! Wot good does 'e do, hye?"

"We must stop all chawnee fer private profit and let the people 'ave the profit. Look w'at we'll sive by cuttin' out all the middlemen, with the government runnin' all the country's business, in a sense o' speakin'."

But another worker, ambling up, asked if they were sure there'd be a profit to divide when the government took it over. Altogether he showed that they themselves were not so sure of their own arguments as they let on to be. They all seemed, also, ready to admit that the present situation of the industrial owner or manager is, at least in South Wales, well-nigh impossible.

"Yes, our young boss comes along about once a day to see how the job is comin'. But if 'e comes oftener, we makes it uncomfortable fer 'im. If there's a bit too much bossin' we 'down tools' on 'im. . . . This eyen't so bad; we gets 195 per cent war bonus on our pre-war sixpence ha'penny the hour—that's about one and ninepence, and with all the 'blows' (rests) we tykes w'en no boss is around, we don't work so much as 'arf our eight hours."

"That's it, education!" all chorussed again when I happened to mention it as giving the worker a chance for rising. Besides the night schools the Independent Labor Party furnishes classes to workers in various subjects in local groups and the Ruskin Labor College also offers classes for the more ambitious, with still others maintained by the Workers' Educational Alliance. But whether these are mainly for propaganda rather than education, or whether the class lines are too set to be vaulted even by the educated, in any event they apparently feel strongly that these facilities offer very little chance of carrying a man up into the group which they believe has in its control the industry, the government, and everything else worth owning.

Up on the open-hearth floor or "smelting stage" the hands or helpers laughed when I spoke of the young radicals I had talked with in the checkers below. Still they, too, agreed that the "sample passer," or head melter, as we call him, in charge of the stage, had to go easy with his orders or they "downed tools" on him at once. But they were intent on their job and could evidently be pretty well trusted to get out their tonnage for their pay—much the same as the gas men handling the gas producers across the way.

It is impossible to overstate their disgust at hearing of the men in America who still work the ten and fourteen hour turns on the furnaces. None here in this part of the country seem ever to have done it.

The price of clothes—about twice in America what it is here, of board and room almost ditto, the comparative chances to become an official, the hours, the kind of education—these seem to be the things of chief concern. The international range of their interests is most surprising—the result of the same kind of letters as the one shown by the red-headed Irishman back there in the restaurant in Woolwich. All seem to have brothers or cousins writing back—or visiting back—from America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Tasmania, South Africa, etc., etc. (India, I judge, gets people more from the educated and official group.) The influence of these facts about clothes, jobs, laundry, as thus given, appears to me hard to overestimate largely because of the unbounded confidence placed in their source. This is sufficient to cause easy discounting of most of the published or other more general testimony to the contrary. This is especially the case in a country where the situation favors blaming the "capitalist press" for any unwelcome news or opinion of whatever sort. Thus our personal relations and the confidence we have in those around us come to play a vital part as a sort

of sieve or screen to determine what particular set of facts, opinions, and experiences out of all those around us really get through to us and so determine our whole attitude toward everything else imaginable.

"Oh, aye! I'm sorry I didn't go with th' intention av remainin' in America," said one big helper. "Me brothers do be proprietors at a big worrks there noo."

"To Africa I'm goin' next winter," said a young man who had been an apprentice in electricity for four years and was now helping to get into shape the conveying machinery for the two new huge blast-furnaces. He thought the manager had a pretty hard time trying to get on with the fourteen unions engaged in getting the place ready. Fourteen unions in South Wales! I pity the poor "super"!

Yes, whether we recognize it or not, the labor problem is growing more and more international. The queer thing is that with all these international friends and relatives and their market quotations on the going rate of muscle and sweat and skill, so many of the workers have been on the same job here for decades and decades and speak a language so hard to understand. When I asked one helper to-day what an old smelter was trying to tell me, saying I couldn't understand him, the answer was disconcerting:

"Well, 'e do sye as 'ow 'e doon't oonderstand *ye*."

A few minutes ago I was glad to help put the trawler man—his name is Bolton—on board his trawler, ready to set off for a two weeks' trip to-morrow. He is fairly sober, though he says he's eaten nothing in five days and owes the proprietor of the pub five "quid" for the beer and whiskey he's been drinking in place of food.

"And I'll pay him, too, when I get back if I have to sell my shirt. Lots o' these Welshmen won't. I've not got many principles, but I've got that one at least.

"Well, I've had a bad education," he said when I tried to solve the mystery of his remarkable fund of information,

his air of culture, and his drunkenness. "As a youngster I was taught to be a yes-sir, no-sir kid—with no mind of my own. Then I went off to a 'public' school. After that I went, according to proper etiquette, into 'chambers.' There I was suddenly my own boss with my own key and everything, and started to live fast and raise cain. . . . Now I can't stick at anything—I get fed up, d' ye see? I got to try something else—I get fed up too quick, that's the trouble. Now, my brothers, they're good boys and they stay in the office till 4.30 every day of their lives. I'd stay the first day and then I'd leave at four and the next day at 3.30, see? . . . Go to the movies? No, ye see, unless I got more beer in me than I have now they bore me. If I'm sober I can't cry or get anything out of them, so what's the use of going? No, I'm no good and I know it. Well, here we are—good-by and good luck to you! And to-morrow when they'll give me not a single drop of whiskey or even beer, I'll go through the torments of the damned! Ta-ta."

I'd certainly like to see him again. He's a wreck worth salvaging.

## CHAPTER III

### "BACK TO THE MINES" AND THE "BOLSHIES"!

A Rhondda Valley Coal Town,  
S. Wales,  
July 15th.

FOR the last few hours I've been feeling myself some miles farther beyond "the jumping-off place" than ever in my life before—even farther than one homesick day when we got aboard the dirty little Chilean steamer and with our supply of chicken and beef crowing and bellowing forlornly, headed down from Panama to Callao and Lima, Peru.

A job here was certainly far enough away from all probabilities yesterday when I left Swansea. Following a chance suggestion it looked worth while to come up from Cardiff and visit a school of mines in order to ask some questions about the district's chief industry, coal. Within a half-hour it was arranged that one of the professors there would find me a job in a big mine whose officials are friends of his. Before sunset one of these told his superintendent that I was a "friend of a friend" of his who needed a job but was also interested in studying a typical Welsh mine before returning to America for further study.

So I'm all set for appearing at the pit-head to-morrow morning at 6.30. Also as lonesome and far-away-some as could be conceived, surrounded—almost overwhelmed—by these great towering mountains, these foreign-speaking Welsh, and these forlornly bleating sheep that nose for morsels of food in the ash cans and garbage boxes of the little coal town's main street which mounts rapidly up to the head of the valley and the "tip" or tippie of the big colliery.



It must be this strangeness of sights and sounds which gives this far-away feeling, for strangely enough the other "feel" which exists right along with it is the amazing friendliness of the people here. I can't imagine anything to exceed the hearty neighborliness and hospitality of the master mechanic and of the wife he brought back after his several years in America, to the total stranger introduced to them by the superintendent—he had told me it would be much harder to find me lodgings than work.

The mechanic was plainly sorry that the wife was too hard worked to be willing to take on a new family member for the length of my stay, but he was quite too much the man of character to insist. America had treated him well—with his best job in the Pullman works just before the World's Fair—" 'ard work it been, sir—'arder than men work over 'ere, a lot—but with good pay awnd good chawnces." To recover from an attack of fever he had come back to the home valley and town to find his father anxious to turn over to him his job as head blacksmith of the mine—and so had stayed ever since. Evidently the mother had fallen into the hard-working ways which appear to be the lot of all the women of the town. The boss, as she called him, was glad when she announced that it would be quite possible to find me a place beneath the roof of their tidy company house for the night at least.

"Aye, he shall sleep with the boss!" she exclaimed with great definiteness and satisfaction when she had thought it all through. "Oh, aye, he shall sleep with the boss—and I shall sleep with Sallie—that's my oldest daughter."

"Aye, now that will be fine!" assented the husband.

"Ye can take a swill now, and then we'll have a sip o' tea before we go out to look up a place for ye. 'Tis sorry I am that we cawn't 'ave ye 'ere regular. But ye see she be'n't as strong as she were," he added to me as the wife went up to make all ready.

I judged finally what the "swill" referred to in the way of ablutions in the tin basin and managed to take clean hands as well as hungry lips to the table for the bread and butter and jam and tea. These seemed to have changed only in price from the days of twenty years ago.

Certainly no old friend could have given me a better recommendation than he when we started down the street into the bottom of the valley. But it was slow work in the crowded town, until he finally turned the job over to one of his assistants. I understand "the boss" has under him sixty men in the blacksmith shop and the other places for keeping up the mine equipment. On all sides the men and women of the town spoke to him with the greatest respect and good-will though with none too much familiarity.

"Tidy people they are. Ye'll fawncy that place!" they both exclaimed this morning when word came that a place had been found with the "night-overman" of a near-by pit. The night with them and the good breakfast in the kitchen certainly proved the simplicity and cleanliness of their own housekeeping and made me sorry not to be staying longer.

"'Twill insult us if ye say another word in regards to thot!" they chorussed when I wanted to pay something for their solid hospitality. "We do too much fawncy sharing with any one from America, we do, to take money from 'em. And ye must roon up often to see us, too."

Already I have found a great many of the townspeople have relatives or close friends in America and seem to know the country's geography surprisingly well. I only hope they are properly informed when they take such care to pass onto me the tale of the surpassing success which has attended the careers of these overseas members of the family. All are interested in my having had a grandfather who emigrated to the States from the very next county to this one. All that being true, it is amazing to notice the extent

to which ordinary conversation is carried on in Welsh—among the children as well as the grown-ups. It is easy to see, too, from the glances and the introductions, that visiting strangers are rare indeed in the town and that any one who is not able to talk the local language is looked upon as a foreigner whether from America, England, or elsewhere.

I hope that no danger bodes even though the place is said to be the very hottest centre of the Bolshevistic unrest which affects the whole South Wales district and which in turn is said to be the most disturbed of all Great Britain outside Scotland's Clyde district. It is a delight to find that this is the very town, and I am to work in the very pit, in which the men were reported in the London paper of a few days ago to have walked out against orders and, in their black faces and working clothes, to have marched one thousand strong to the funeral of a comrade. It would look as though a sojourn in their midst ought to be interesting quite apart from the "insight into Welsh mining methods" referred to so frequently by the boss in his various introductions. In actuality, of course, the men themselves and their ways mental and spiritual constitute exactly the "methods" I am after.

The house where I'm settled at this moment looks clean, with a hard-working woman of less than thirty-five engaged in the town's chief pastime of chasing dirt from off the door stones and "pawsages" just inside, as also from the floor of the kitchen which serves as pantry, dining-room, and bathroom for the town's bread-winners. All the houses are of brick or stone, placed right on the street, and of the same plan and pattern as almost all the others of the town, with which, indeed, they are all connected under the line of roofs unbroken except at the street intersections. With their four or six rooms, the water faucet or "tap" inside the kitchen, and with the toilet plumbing under the same roof or across the alley, it is better housing than I saw in

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many American mine towns. The rent seems to run from four to six and seven dollars, including water and almost a ton of coal a month.

In spite of the attempt at cleanliness which is so evident, I find that I must add to the multitudinous bites of the fleas of Swansea—for purposes of simplicity I find it easier to ascertain their total number by multiplying at the rate of twenty per leg or arm!—the more serious flaming calling-cards of the beast that uses the reddest of blood-red ink to sign his name.

Perhaps it is these cards which are responsible for my present conviction that this particular way of getting an insight into the labor problem has its moments of demoralizing discomfort and forlornness. Anyway, I'll walk out for another view of the splendid mountains and for another enjoyment of the pleasantly rushing and murmuring stream by the side of the main street, and hope to have plenty of active and interesting things—and if possible plenty of real, live Bolsheviks—to cheer me up to-morrow down in the deep, dark entries “inside.”

A Rhondda Coal Town  
July 16.

First the booming whistle from the pit-head. Then the bang-bang on the front door of every house in the town by the official “knocker-up.” Then the sound of the wooden and iron shod feet of hurrying men. All this started the day at 5.30 and got me down to the eggs and the strong bacon which the landlady had bought on my directions—she would not board me for a fixed sum with prices so unsteady. Shortly after, I started off with some sandwiches in a paper and some water in a whiskey bottle for the day's work.

Health insurance, etc., had been signed for the day before—I wish they would frame the question differently from “To what person should word be sent in case of ac-



cident?" So my safety lamp and number came without trouble, though it was evident that the stranger was attracting a surprising lot of attention. I was certainly not expert enough to follow the lead of all the others who immediately took their lamp and, after revolving it in a way to test the lock, blew upon it above the glass and watched to see if by any chance the flame would show it. In that case, I presume, they would return it. At the top of the shaft all wicks and lamps got a further inspection by a presumable expert. All this care gave an unpleasant feeling of unmistakable gassiness in the pit below. No one gave the slightest sign of having read the night before of the falling of a cage in a mine just a few miles away, with the serious injuring of twenty men. When our turn came to be counted into the hoist by the "banksman" I had to shut my eyes to keep out the dirt as the engineer gave us a quick plunge down the thousand feet to the "bottom."

It was a pretty dark place in spite of the few electric lights—very different from the whitewashed and brilliantly illuminated "central station" of the second mine of last year, back in Pennsylvania. A few inquiries got me to some sort of boss who called to another to take me down to "Evans, in 18," so we started past the crowds of boys and men who seemed to be waiting for "pit eyes" before starting off toward their locations. Our oil-flame lamps gave little enough light, though mostly we walked in groups with every one's lamp carried near the ground. In addition to the timbers which had to be watched for bumps, there were also, every few yards, the iron hangers for carrying the steel "ropes" or cables by which the cars of coal are brought to the bottom for sending up on the hoist. The coal seam has been so disturbed here that the same seam is to be found at a variety of depths. This means that—as I found to my surprise and my sorrow—we were climbing first up hill then down as we walked along the main



headings to our destination. These ups and downs would have made it very risky for men to ride to their districts in the "man-trip," or train, as we did in one of the Pennsylvania mines. Finally after we had walked close to two miles up and down, I was given, after another disconcertingly careful inspection of our lamps, into the hands of Evans, the repair man. With another laborer we started off through some very tumble-down portions of the "return air passage" for the fixing of a "gob" or heap of slate and "muck" so held in place by our wall of stone as to carry some of the weight of the roof when the timbers should give out.

We had moved only a few of the rails and ties there after we had sat down to "take a blow" to rest from the long and I must say unusually tiring, walk, before a fireman (fire boss in America) came hurriedly to say that a fall had just occurred in a near-by heading. It was evidently up to us to fix it up before the expected fall of further parts of the roof occurred and so prevent coal from being taken out from "by there," as the Welsh put it. So with each of us carrying his proper share of the picks and shovels, sledges and bars, we made our way—with many bumps for the least experienced—through some very dreary passages to the place where we tried to keep one eye on the work of our shovels in throwing the fallen slate away and another on a nasty-looking piece of "top," as the repairer called it.

"Stawnd you, quick, by there, not by 'ere!" Evans said when he had looked it all over carefully and expertly. "By 'ere, if it fall, it 'ave to bounce by there."

With the same sort of skill he chose the exact place where he should stand for striking a half-fallen rock with his heavy iron bar until finally it came thundering down—after he had counselled the other two of us to stand well back under the timbers. With similar "know-how," too,

he showed how to take note of the grain of the great rock so as to make the strokes of our sledges count for breaking it into pieces small enough to be pushed and carried to one side. When the big and handsome draft-horse came along and got past without let or danger with its tram of coal—these Welshman call it “dram”—we shouldered our tools again and went back with the feeling that the successful maintenance of way and so the moving of coal pretty much depended upon us, in spite of our having the humblest job in the mine outside of the work given to boys.

I wish I could paint the picture presented an hour or so later when Powell, the under-manager or under-superintendent, came along to look us and our work over and the conversation got quickly around to the recent funeral demonstration. All the light, of course, came from our safety-lamps suspended by their hooked handles from the edges of the upturned or “tumbled” “dram,” with the darkness making a heavy frame around the gray figures and the coal-covered, sweaty faces of the four of us. Evans was on his knees—the result of old habits favored by the thin seams of coal he had met and mastered in his forty-three years of work in this one pit! His face showed the lines of a lot of living and working and also of a good deal of thinking. Powell, Sanders, Evans’s buddy, and I sat or stood about, with the shadows of our heads sprawling over the rough rock of the low “top,” which almost touched us.

“To ’elp the other fellow a great mon the dead chap was. ’Twas for thot we fawncied goin’ to ’is funeral,” argued Evans. “Public-spirited ’e was, d’ye see? Besides a good mon on our deputations to the management.”

“Well, poor respect to such a man, I call it, to go to his funeral without so much as washing your face!” answered Powell. “And any of you who were his friends could have got permission to get off in time for a swill before you saw him buried if you had asked for it, you know.”

"Ah, but two carriages they said was all to be furnished and what chawnce would I 'ave 'o bein' in 'em? No, when ye refused us to come out at the regular time all of us 'ad to support each other's dirty faces in the payin' of oor respect."

"Well, then, you should have supported each other in coming home again with proper decorum instead of singing and skylarking disgracefully as you did. A thousand men of you! For shame!"

"To play the mon—that's me motto and as the good Book says, 'Do unto others' and 'Bear ye one another's burdens.' That's what all of us must do, dead or alive," the old man fairly shouted when the dispute grew hotter. "And all that's the last thing the company do be a thinkin' 'av these days, I tell 'oo, Mr. Powell! These extremists, mind ye, go too far. But more perse-oo-asion—that's what we should 'awve around 'ere in the whool place. There's noon av us that wants a bit more than proper joostice. That—with more perse-oo-asion—and all would be 'appy 'ere aboot."

"All I know," said the much-tried under-manager when things had cooled down just as they came closest to boiling over, "all I know is that there's no pleasure in a job like mine about the place these days—when everybody seems to want a fair sight more than justice for themselves and to give a fair sight less than justice to others around them. I'm fair sick of it all, I jolly well know that."

"It's not so much what the boys do 'awve to-day as what their forefathers in the mine been 'awving," explained the old miner when we had started back to our "gob" after the hour's strenuous discussion. "Mony and mony av us 'awve worked our furtnight by some place, ye oonderstand, and then 'ahd to pay our buddies more than we earned ourselves. Too much 'All right. Let it lie!' there been around by 'ere, too, from a certain official some years ago

and now. A fireman I was, but it was too much the lash av my tongue thot was to drive me men for me to stay on it. I believe too much in the good of fair words for the workin' man—I know 'ow they gets the best out av me, ye oonderstand. The new manager been more for this nor the old un, but 'e's 'ahd to go way, fair sick and like to die o' the worry av it all—with the 'Bolshies' and all, these months."

His other helper, Sanders, is a clean-cut young man who seems to have little sympathy with the Bolshies, though willing to give their arguments a fair hearing. He sings the leading part in a home-talent comic opera now on the boards and is a teetotaller.

"Sixteen year it been," put in the stalwart repairer, "since drink been on me lips. Me woman it been thot do the job. Pity thot I marry only when forty years been pawssed. Oop till by then, there been nothin' av evil but I been the doer av it—short of murderin' and thievin'. . . . 'Twas when me older brother died and me mother been 'ard 'it—she and me fawther 'ad no chawnce to lay by a penny, ye' oonderstawnd—'twas then I told 'er I'd play the part av a mon so far as in me lies.

"Thot brother went to work by 'ere in this pit when 'e been seven. Carried in each morning by me fawther, 'e been, to 'elp with the doors and such so the family could get the money from the 'drams.' At nine 'twas me. . . . No, never no schoolin'. Mony's the week I've come in afoor sun oop and gone oot after sundown—and then been too done in to care whether the sun been oop or down the Sunday. Twelve hours, usual—for ye could stay in as long as ye liked and we 'ad to stay long enough to get the drams we needed for oor bread and keep. Twelve hours, with often a steady go from Friday mornin' till Saturday night to try to get a'ead a bit. . . . Yes, thot been in mony minds av those who listen now to the Bolshies—though they do think they go too far, ye oonderstawnd."



“Studying and reading we are,” explained a member of the Bolshie group this evening at the public house, “so now we’re fit and ready to govern. We’re educated now, ye see, just like the Russian peasants that before the Great War was ignorant. Now see how well they’re ruling: fit they are now and educated. . . . Well, that’s because ye read the capitalistic press; we ’ave information direct from Russia by unprejudiced sources all about the wonderful way the working class is governing. We ’ave classes in Marx and all the others right ’ere and now we’re ready to take over the job of runnin’ the country. First off, we must make the company by ’ere so much trouble that they will give over the mines to the government. . . . Now ye’ll ’ave another pint wi’ me. Yes, this is my fifth.”

Well, it “do look” like an interesting place. The makings of trouble are surely in the air. Whether anything breaks out before I get away is a question, but the chances look good. With all the smoke there should be some fire, especially when there appears to be plenty of heat behind the smoke.

Anyway, that “gob” and that “fall” gave me arms and shoulders that can appreciate a bed until that strenuous and unforgetting “knocker-up” starts on his noisy rounds to-morrow early.

Same Place  
Saturday,  
July 17.

To-day I got my lamp and got down to the bottom without attracting so much attention as yesterday. Old Evans told me the reason:

“I been fair surprised at ye yesterday. Ye see, no miner do use the overalls, as ye call them, such as ye do wear yesterday. To-day ye look like a goodish miner man, wi’ yer box awnd yer Jack in yer pocket like.”

The tin box was lent me by “the boss” and keeps your



sandwiches from being eaten by the rats that infest the mine—also your coat, for they often eat that in trying to get at the food. The Jack is the name for the tin water-bottle or flask which, to show you're a regular miner, must be carried in the coat pocket. It was positively comical to see how insistent my pal Sanders was yesterday in giving me instructions as to exactly what and how and when I must do to-day so as to show myself like the rest. After he had critically examined my jersey he very considerably opined that it would do, without the muffler which would otherwise have been the proper form. Of course, he agreed with Evans that the machinist suit of overalls which the local storekeeper put over on me would never do, because never worn there by anybody who ever did any actual work.

"In the old days," went on Evans, "we did used to 'ave 'andsome 'Yorks' of fine leather with silver buckles on 'em to catch up our pants wi' below the knees, instead o' these 'ere strings as now. Awnd silver buttons, too, been on our wide-flarin' pants at the bottoms, some'at like s'ilors. But I guess we gives such things the attention like thot because we was wearin' 'em, those days, near all the howers (hours) o' the day. 'Twas Sundays only thot we did used to wear the reg'lar ones, and seldom then."

The surprising thing is, not so much the exact particularity of the requirements which go with every job in the working world, but rather how largely these requirements for good form are evidently the result of long experience. Most of these in this connection come from that old fact that the miner works hard while he's at it and then "takes a blow" for a short loaf. That means that he must be prepared easily to peel off the coat and vest and shirt and have on only an undershirt and pants for the heavy sweating required to rip the coal from "the face" and get it into the "dram," or car, before the "haulier" comes to get it out to the switch or "parting" with his handsome big horse. Any-

thing like shoulder overalls that lessen the ease of this peeling off for the work, or the later covering up when the walk back to the bottom brings you more and more into the strong draft of the fans, is sure to be taboo among miners and—quite properly.

Just now, at least, there seems to be a great deal of conversation going on in the headings—considerably more conversation than perspiration. This morning we were shovelling our “muck” of stone and refuse into the gob pretty well, but it was “down tools” for quite a while when a “bradish man” (bratticer or partition and door fixer) came along. After speaking of the pride he had in doing a “good job” of air-tightness on the door near us, he proceeded to help us talk over the present tense situation between the management and the men.

“It’s goin’ too far these Bolshies be. Aye, we must ’ave order o’ some kind, you know. But then we must all ’ave the chawnce to play the mon, too. The manager ’e do forget thot. Of coorse, ’e ’ave worked oop from the bottom like, but ’e do think too much we been now the same as w’en he tell us always: ‘If ye do-unt like it, let it lie and take yer tools and go.’ And our leaders in Parliament, too—wull, if they do start a-mis-representin’ us, then ’tis for us to show ’um by direct action. And if thot costs a few lives it do only show the value of what we do gain from ut—for things valooable do always cost some’at, whatever, doun’t they? . . . Still, where will law and order be then, I do wonder, I do.”

In such talks “inside” as well as elsewhere above ground in this part of the country, the great complaint seems to be that the once radical leaders grow conservative the moment they get to Parliament or otherwise come into serious responsibility. Thereupon their former constituents begin to think disorder the only way of getting their way—their radical way. In any event, or, as these people say, “what-

ever," the extremists are quite evidently getting a pretty respectful hearing at the hands of the older workers here who are much puzzled what to think of it all. About half the usual amount of coal is coming out of the pits. Fully eighty per cent of the "colliers" or hewers of coal at the face are said to have abandoned all effort to get out a decent amount of coal per day and are taking the minimum wage established by law—about five pounds seven per week—without really earning it. As a result, accurate weights are no longer of interest to the men. So the local union is reported to have dismissed, quite without previous notice and without further responsibility to them, the old men who for years have served their fellow-workers faithfully as check weighmen. These officials are hired by the union to verify the weights of each as sent up and credited to the proper collier. These here are now beseeching the management for jobs, but they are too old to handle tools. Everybody, whether worker or official, seems to be about as unhappy over it all as the under-manager reported himself yesterday.

Underground the hours go by with fair speed, partly because we have the seven-hour day "from bank to bank"—that is, from outside to outside, including the two-mile walk each way. Outside, the women seem never to finish their work with the threshold stones, nor the children their play in the streets. Strangely enough, these last seem at one and the same time the dirtiest and worst dressed and the happiest and least quarrelsome lot imaginable—also the most undertoothed and ill-toothed. Am told that this is because dentists have not yet come into the valley except rarely, with tooth-brushes an equal rarity. Until recently a toothache here has meant appealing first to a doctor, who felt fussing with people's dirty teeth beneath his dignity, and then going to a certain miner who—without washing up after his day in the pit—would reach for his pliers

while the victim showed him which tooth was guilty, and perhaps asked the doctor to hold his head! All the youngsters seem to come naturally by a fondness for singing. One little tike, of less than four with a big chest and bigger stomach, stands up and sings as though he was the prize-taker at an Eisteddfod, as doubtless he will be some day.

The mountains seem to be in different mood every time we come up out of the pit—though mostly they seem to be weeping rain and cold mists which make a fellow appreciate the mass of heavy clothes the landlady piles on the bed. Which reminds me that that “goaf” or “gob” in the pit, in spite of all the day’s dissertations on government, gave a wearisome day that makes pushing a pen less attractive than “hitting the hay.”

Rhondda Valley  
Monday, July 19.

Well, it certainly looks as though things were going to break loose around these parts! How matters can go on like this much longer I’m sure I don’t know—unless the management turns philanthropist and sends the men down into the pit merely to get away from the constant rain we have on top! For all day down in the headings 1,000 feet below it has been little but a succession of Bolshevik meetings. Although the miner, or collier, to whom I have been transferred, and I did almost a fair day’s work in the filling of our trams, the others at the face near us were either arguing lustily or singing most of the day about the beauty of the “red flag of revolution” to the tune of “Maryland, my Maryland!”

“Ta-k-e. Ta-k-e No-t-ice!” It was the voice of the town crier yesterday afternoon that followed the ringing of the bell and started the excitement. “Ta-k-e no-t-ice! A- gen-er-al meet-ing will be held this af-ter-noon at four o’c-lock to discuss the summonses.” Of course, I made



sure to be there, although it was intended only for the members of the local union.

It seems that some weeks ago the Monday-morning shift refused to go down to work because the Sunday-night shift had not gone in, due to their wanting extra pay for the Sunday-night hours. The Monday workers figured, of course, that the constant falls from a mine roof make it harder to work after every shift that has failed to take its turn. This refusal for three Mondays had been met by sixty miners being "summonsed" for the damages caused the company by their not working without proper reason—all according to the Mines Act of the realm.

"Thot's joost it! Nobody cawn oonderstand it, so 'twill surely puzzle and embarrass the management—which is exactly w'at we want—so they will countermand the summonses," the chairman was explaining to the hall of about four hundred miners. "The more contradictory these rules we're makin' now, the better."

"So, then, men, 'tis understood by each and every one and we 'ave all voted and approved the rules to be read now by the secretary. 'No collier is to tumble 'is tram (lift it off the rails so that a full car may pass). No collier is to fill a tram not provided with the proper pins (for holding in the end board safely). No 'aulier is to leave 'is 'orse, etc., etc.' And all this is to be done even though it means sabotage and the sending out of no coal at all, at all. And now, gentlemen, please note, 'In no case is any collier to mark his number or the location of the coal he can send oop after due regardin' av these rules.'"

The rules certainly seemed to cover every possible move, even to the non-handling of the "posties" (posts) by the timbermen except under certain conditions. On the whole, too, the votes showed a pretty unanimous raising of hands, with the biggest objections, apparently, coming from the still more extreme workers who wanted a definite vote of



“down tools,” so as the better to uphold their religion of “direct action.” Whether for or against, it is certain that every one puts into the whole matter an immense amount of earnestness and feeling—and soreness against the management. Something has surely been eating at these men, young and old: the ugliest words with the most fervor behind them are likely to get the most handclappings and whistlings.

The high animation of the meeting was still going on this morning when we lined up to be counted into the cage at the “bank.” On the way up the steep hill to the “tip” in the pouring rain, by the way, I found myself catching the spirit which underlies the miner’s strange satisfaction in his work far down below wind and weather: I noted with unconcern my sopping wet clothes and thought how pleasant—how dry and warm—it would be down there a thousand feet inside!

“All them rules be constitootional and accordin’ to the Mines Act,” said my new boss called Williams the North Walesian, to distinguish him from the numberless other William Williameses of the town. “But this ’ere not markin’ o’ the drams: av thot I do be ooncertain.”

He has been here in this pit over forty years—an old chum of my friend the repairer. It kept me busy joining him in his greetings of “How be?” and “Shumei!” as we passed the crowds waiting at the different “splits” or “partings” of the headings. The way these men can name a man yards and yards off down the black entry simply by the way his lamp swings is marvellous! When necessary, he explained to his friends that I was studying mining with him (all of them have shown themselves extremely friendly, especially now that I wear proper miner’s togs.) Though both fat and old, “William” can rip down enough coal from the long wall assigned us to keep me properly busy with my shovel and my “curlin’ box,”—a sort of three-

sided wash-pan or scoop for carrying it to the tram. Instead of putting us into a "room" by ourselves this system of "long wall" mining gives us a wide "stall" where only a brattice or partition of canvass separates us from a dozen and more others working at the same face. While we have kept going, these others seem to have given the turn mostly to discussing the new rules and damning the management—and 'most everything else.

"But, av coorse, religion be only a cloak to cover and protect the capitalists while they rob the workin' classes," says one in rebuttal of the driller. The latter is Salvation Army exhorter on week-ends. He quotes the Good Book about "do unto others" and shakes his puzzled head with his "Wull, I been fair woonderin' whether Jesus Christ been Bolshie were 'e 'ere the noo."

"War 'ave wokened the worker, ye oonderstand, to know 'is trimindyos power. To a degree—'tis only thot, to a degree—we know oor power now. And I do be thinkin' thot war between oos awnd the United States would wike the workpeople av the whool worrld, becoose 'twould wike the worrkers of the two countries thot domineer the worrld, ye oonderstand. Av coorse, the capitalists do be clever in niver goin' quite too far in their oppressions. 'Twould be better if they did. But the worrld war be the oondoin' av them, whatever."

My listenings get a sharp word from William as he places some enormous chunks of coal in a position to raise the walls of the tram, thus requiring a tremendous swing for me to get my box of coals or "curls" to the top. Since we are working in the "two foot nine" seam that swing generally means a bump on my head, even though the seam where we are now is thicker than its name. With a final "Three Cheers for the Revolution!" from the others, the Salvation Army man turns to holding his drill to the hole in the hard stone roof while his buddy keeps up a steady,

ringing succession of sledge blows upon it—for these two are day or job men, not colliers, and therefore not so free to decide whether they will work or not.

Of course William and I took our “blow” after we had walked the two miles to our location past some bad bumps on my head and under some awful pieces of “top.” In one of these he turned, and after pointing to some dreadful looking roof, touched his lips to counsel silence for fear of causing a fall. That’s one reason why I’ve not liked the lusty songs about the Revolution; it makes the roof vibrate and drop slivers of slate on old William and me as we work! In other places he would indulge in occasional listening to make sure that no part of it was “working.” Laboring from about eight and then starting back on the long tiresome trudge to the bottom at one or 12.45, with an hour instead of the theoretical twenty minutes out for eating and dozing, does not leave a great amount of time for actual work, especially when the haulier is seldom on hand with his horse as soon as the tram is ready. But while it lasts it is hot work, especially when the collier has to kneel and with mighty pick strokes and heavy grunts “nick his corner,” that is, cut the farther end of our stall away from the solid pillar of coal that seems to grip the face near it with the tightness of stone. It seems that the long-wall method of working is favored partly because of its easier ventilation and partly because the elastic kind of roof we have here serves to push the coal forward toward the collier in a way which permits the ripping off of great bulging yards of it except where it connects up with the seam at the “corners,” where the roof is still supported by the unmined vein. No machine cutting is needed, and no explosive charge. The unpleasant part is that this more elastic roof is said also to be more dangerous!

“By ’ere! Quick, mon, quick!” Under the timbers!” John yelled with all his might at me this morning as a huge

shelf or cliff of the black stuff responded to his pick and started to fall in a way to knock out the timbers nearest the face, and so to endanger the top above us. I certainly did some scrambling!

"Ye'll be knowing the meanin' o' this?" he later asked, when on our way out we came by a long gray box the size of a coffin in one of the silent headings and he lifted his lamp to show the stretcher inside it. I thought of it—indeed I doubt if I'll ever forget it's gray and silent sombreness—a few minutes later, when we came nearer the bottom by the hoist and found the wire cables humming and swinging dangerously as they pulled up to the bottom the small number of trams the day's work had turned out. "These do daunt me some'at," he shouted above the roar of the "ropes." "The overman 'ere mony a year is in bed because of 'um now."

While we waited for our turn at the hoist a young worker with a very bright face told of his seven living children with two others dead, and of his start in the mining at the age of eleven years and eight months—also of his broken leg from one of these same ropes on his second day. About the Bolshies he said under his breath:

"They're overproud of themselves and their extremes. But, after all, they're the mouthpiece of the whool crowd of us, for all of us are fair un'appy."

From him and others at the pit-head we learned that in some districts or parts of the mine the colliers had marked their trams, while in others they had refused to mark them, and so been told to leave for the day. Without the marking of the location the company is, of course, powerless to know where the coal comes from and so to what landowners to pay the royalties of so much per ton.

Evidently the first day's battle had been a draw. Some new move will doubtless be the plan of the leaders for tomorrow. There it is now! The bell of the crier and his



ominous "Ta-ke no-ti-ce. A general mee-t-ing will be held at six o'clock—to discuss the summonses."

It wouldn't be surprising if some pretty rough proposals—possibly, even, some bloody ones—were put forth, judging from some of the whispers against the management heard to-day:

"Millions the company 'awve mide durin' the war! Millions! . . . A tyrant 'e is and allus been, this hagent (agent is the term for a sort of general manager). It's a petition we should get oop fer awskin' of 'im to leave the town. . . . Self-made 'e been, but a self mon too, all for number one, 'e been, never a farthin' for the other chap!"

When men grow as "fair un'appy" on their jobs as these, they seem to care amazingly little what happens to them in the other sectors of their living. That's perhaps the dynamic which gets the work of the world done, but it can also be the dynamite which may blow the top off when things go wrong with the job.

Well, we shall see what we shall see. Anyway, I wouldn't leave the place right now for a life royalty on all the coal in the whole country!

It is these ton royalties, by the way, that contribute greatly to the current unhappiness in coal circles generally. It seems that the famous Sankey Coal Commission of some years ago revealed that the bulk of these royalties, aggregating huge sums, went to a comparatively few great families made great by some Kingly grant centuries ago.

July 20th.

The war is on—with the tide turning in favor of the Bolshies!

This morning we all obeyed the appeals of the leaders at last night's meeting to "carry on" and so went down in the pit as usual—only to attend a succession of meetings at each of the junction points for the discussion of the



question, "to mark or not to mark the trams." As near like the factory soviet meetings of Russia as anything imaginable these gatherings certainly are—as the men put their lamps on the ground or suspend them from their knees while they sit there in groups, in the black and silent headings, talking now English and now Welsh but always with fervor. A husky lot of men they are, assuredly, in their heavy wooden or cobbled shoes, ragged coats, blackened mufflers or neckerchiefs and grimy trousers, with huge leather belts, and tied beneath their knees by their string "yorks." Though some of them seem to have spent too many hours away from the sun, their faces are strongly drawn and well endowed, with strong cheek-bones, good noses, and forward chins.

Public opinion seems to have been doing a lot of work—in favor of the meetings and their resolutions. Says my old buddy to the crowd in his great deep voice:

"This not markin' o' the drams is child's play and I be not goin' along wi' it, ye oonderstawnd. But I do'un't like a black-leg. Last night at the Park pub there been them as says to me: 'Wot mean ye bloody duffers in two foot nine by a-markin' o' yer drams, hye?' . . . No, I cawnt think av the rest o' the byes 'ere a-pointin' of their fingers at me—and the youngsters on the street, mebbe, a-hootin' at me kids after I been dead and gone! Thot do fair daunt me. Aye. So I'm not a-markin' o' me drams to-day—and be damned to 'um!"

When the horses and the hauliers came along as if nothing was wrong, we broke up the meeting and proceeded farther down the heading to another split or switch, where we found another group in the midst of heated arguments and denunciations of the company and the black-legs. Then, perhaps, on again until finally there came back from farther on a group that said the inspector in our district "will na' lock oor lamps!" So every one could

feel that they had “carried on” according to instructions to “Go in until the company turns ye back—and we’ll claim damages from the mawsters later for refusin’ to let us work without due cause.” When we came down in a body to the butts or main passages at the bottom by the shaft, many were singing lustily—and most musically, too, about the “blood-red banners of the hoped-for new order.” As the legs of one hoist load disappeared above us we heard a mighty shout—with the other two of the “Three cheers for the revolution!” drowned by the roar of the up-caught cage.

Of course the pubs have been crowded. Doubtless the excitement has justified many an additional pint.

“Aye, my principles do cost me a quid a week or more,” said a young and rather serious collier who came up to me with an offer to treat in apology for his words of the morning that had showed how tense the situation was becoming. He had, in fact, given me one of the thickest instances of the summer so far. Down in the mine while others were going out I had asked some one where I could find the “under-super” for a question or two. Luckily I could not find him. When I rejoined a group I heard this man ask angrily of the leader of the meetings:

“W’at about this ’ere foreigner American a-workin’ and a-takin’ of our jobs w’ilst we fight for our rights?”

I could do nothing but watch the face of the leader and wait. Luckily the leader saw me and laughed his “W’y mon, right ’ere ’e is!”

“Aye,” my apologist went on, “wi’ the stall I ’as I could easy mike more nor the minimum, but ’twould not be fair to the others. And we must get away from piece-work thot mikes differences between comrades—besides mikin’ men old before their time.”

Here one of his chums came up with his pint and his apology to my friend. “Hi be ’e as spoke in ’aste and

anger to ye this mornin', Thomas, when ye called this mon a foreigner. For well ye know that amongst us of the International Fraternity all nation do be one. Only differences of clawss do count to divide men. But too sharp Hi spoke, and 'ere's me 'awnd on't. Thou know'st I do mean it."

"The w'ip of the mawsters, 'tis thot thot we be makin' shorter now and this be the wye to fight 'um through the lessenin' of output. Sabotage is a tool thot ony mon of principle can wield—and must." That seems to be the general philosophy.

Outside the pit, a few minutes ago, I met a bright young son of an educated Continental father and Welsh mother who is said to be the leader of the more intellectual of the Bolshies. He is without doubt a clever thinker in the meetings and in an argument one of the best talkers and arguers I have seen in a long time. It would seem proper in a way, too, to say that he is an idealist. He has a well-modelled face, sensitive but strong chin, eye-glasses, and thick black hair. His reasoning shows how many ways there are to arrive at a conclusion if it but be in the line of our desires. ' Here, I submit, is a strong road to follow for landing in a soviet:

"Well, I may be wrong, but I am gambling the next ten or twelve years of my life on my confidence that Russia has found the solution of the whole problem of modern industrial life. That solution is the soviet. If that is true then Russia is going to make every other nation of the world adopt the same plan or be beaten by the competition and the pressure of right methods in business and government. Of course, the successful adoption of that method means the same cost of life of those that sigh for the old flesh-pots of class privilege here as it meant in Russia. There must be the drenching before the firm seating of the proletariat. But that is only a temporary stage. Even

now—before the drenching is finished—they are giving better conditions to the people as a whole in Russia than anywhere on earth—that we know by our secret channels of information.

". . . The great success of the revolutionary propaganda throughout the world is due more than anything else to its clear-cut opposition to alcohol. Drink does more harm to the English worker than all other factors together. One reason why I am so much of a pussyfooter (anti-drink propagandist) is this: during the war when the pubs were closed more than now we had full classes studying Karl Marx and all sorts of revolutionary books and systems of economics down at my rooms and elsewhere. The moment the boys could spend more time with their pints, the classes fell off badly. . . . If we can get all to stand together without flinching, our sabotage will soon make the masters realize that their operation of the mines is unprofitable. You see, output is where they live, of course. . . . And we shall then be ready for taking them over for the workers to operate.

"With the coming of the minimum-wage law in 1911 a man can always be sure of a living and things are not so bad—especially now that practically all the colliers are off of piece-work. But up till then—well, often and often a man could sweat and sweat and still not earn anything from a bad place and besides, was likely to be told by this agent we have here—and have had for nearly forty years—that he could go if he liked, for there were always jobless men ready to take his place. Up till then it has been a dog's life, especially here in Wales where the masters are making millions though their equipment and methods are fifty years behind the times."

I'd give a lot to know to what extent the philosophizings at his maturity have been influenced by the hurt feelings of his youth and childhood, following upon his



birth as an illegitimate or, as it's called here, a "chance" child. It would not be strange if the war had badly embittered him. After finally being made legitimate, as a youth, the war necessity of knowing who every citizen was, put him back into the status of the illegitimate.

Wednesday,  
July 21st.

It's not strange that it happened. Sooner or later it was bound to come. By some, of course, it is regretted as being the work of a drunken rowdy—"A sober mon would not throw bricks through the hagent's window!" By others the bricks are seriously—though rather silently—approved as indicating to the management the feeling of the town without, at the same time, resulting too seriously. Anyway, the assault is on everybody's tongue. There are two or three imported constables in the streets, and the whole situation is even tenser than before.

Last night the deputation sent to see the general manager of all the company's pits reported to the meeting that they had been given no consideration at all and that it was of the utmost importance to keep up the fight in the bitterest possible form. All seemed to agree with the committee, especially when word came that the stipendiary, or judge of the County Court, in charge of such cases had sustained the "summonses." That meant that the thousand miners at the two local pits would be required to give over to the company, out of their wages, damages for the three Mondays of lost work totalling more than 2,000 pounds! At this there was a babel of whistles, hoots, jeers, and calls of "For shime!"

It was not surprising to see a great deal of bitterness come out during the meeting between the men themselves, the majority of the workers of one pit having gone against the vote of the majority and "stabbed their comrades in



the back” by continuing to work and to mark their trams. It would not be easy to imagine more impassioned appeals than were made to these to show unity of purpose—“if not for yourselves then for the next generation to follow ye. We speak to the better man in ye!” Nor more deadly earnestness than that with which some of the offenders pleaded their case because of their personal debts, on the one hand, or, on the other, their all but fanatical conviction that they must oppose every plan which was not out and out strike and direct action.

“Mr. Chairman and fellow-workmen! Mr. Chairman and fellow-workmen!!” His voice shook with his earnestness and emotion as one old fellow pleaded for his conscience. “A mon do ’awve allus the dooty of ’is convictions. I protest thot I be not a moral criminal in the markin’ o’ me drame! Now w’y don’t we down tools? In thot case I would do aught thot ony mon could wish.”

It was more than evident, too, from numerous questions that to many of them the thought of their share of the 2,000 pounds sterling was nothing short of terrifying. I know of no way in the world for finding the value of money equal to attending such a meeting where men’s voices ring with both anger and the tenderest of emotion when they name what seem very moderate sums, knowing that those sums represent the difference between comfort and suffering for their wives and children.

The vote to carry on was unanimous—so much so that practically every one in our pit felt certain that it would only be a matter of marching this morning up the hill that leads away from the bottom of the pit, telling the over-man that we would not mark the trams and then marching down again and going back up to the bank in the hoist. And so it was—except for a few meetings again on the way, with the safety-lamps shining into faces more than ever determined to take every chance for convinc-

ing the "mawsters" of the futility of trying to collect the heavy charge assessed and sustained by the court. I only wish I could draw the picture of those determined faces, the gray and silent rocks, and timbers of the roof, the safety-lamps, suspended across well-patched, swarthy knees or leaned against heavy wood-soled shoes, the glints of their light reflected back from the flashing eyes of troubled men, the walls of coal or the tin boxes and jacks in an occasional pocket—the solid frame of darkness enclosing all.

All day, of course, it has been more talking. One group was made up of three of the oldest and most serious of all those I have met or listened to.

"Two bawd it be," said one, "thot the manager do not move from out the toown. W'y, the other day, his deputy be down in me district and 'e tell me 'Tom, thot be a good job.' I tell 'im, 'In over forty year 'ere thot be the first time thot ony mon fer the company do sye to me, 'Tom, thot be a good job.'"

"O, aye! W'y, for a good word," cut in one of the others, "a mon o' sensibility do work 'is guts out! But no dog be-'ave well for a mawster with a w'ip, and for a man of feelin' the w'ip of the tongue and the lash of the lip been worse nor ony w'ip on ony dog. For thot we 'awve so much o' this lash this forty year we do follow as we do these extremists, though where we do be a-comin' at 'tis fair 'ard to say in such a hower (hour) as this."

"These Bolshies no oonderstood Bible," put in a North Walesian rock-driller who had learned his English too late to get his tenses. "I think Jesus Christ no Bolshie. . . . But I see my family starve befoor go in for work one more day against majority, like yesterday!"

"Oh, aye! Thou knowst!" assents a companion. "I do know thy neighbor Evan Thomas do say yesterday as 'e do 'awve 'is eye on thee! . . . Yet 'e would na' wish thee 'arm, whatever."

Again there is to be a meeting to-night—with the possibility of news from another deputation that has been in conference with the management, under the leadership of one of the union’s wisest county officials. Again the second of the pits has been working, although our own has been entirely out. Regret at the failure of the attempt on the official’s life is amazingly outspoken. Close knots of men are always to be seen and the women seem to have much to whisper to each other from their door-steps, even though the everlasting scrubbing of the stones continues unabated.

One of the country’s new women justices of the peace spoke the other night while we waited to hear from a deputation. She made a fervent appeal that the wife of the worker should enjoy all the comforts of electric equipment the same as the finest ladies of the land. I could not make out whether she secretly realized where some of the trouble lay when she passed on to urge that the miners here pass the two-thirds vote necessary by law to compel the company to put in pit-head baths for an up-keep charge on the men of only threepence per week. For her electric equipment would seem to have small chance when local opinion seems to be so divided upon the matter of changing the present habits and traditions which keep the women forever scrubbing up after their men have brought all the dust and grime of the mine into the house.

“Just when I have succeeded in gettin’ cleaned oop, then ’usband comes ’ome and starts disorderin’ things with ’is bathin’” (pronounced “bath-in”), says the wife of the repairer with whom I have just had tea. So it seems to be everywhere in the town as well as here in this house. Luckily there is a “bosh,” or trough, where the “tap” runs, and for the ordinary wash the hot water is poured into it after it has served for the washing of the dishes and everything else in the household. I found it embarrassing that

first day to know just when the young wife of the overman was going to leave off helping me with the tub of hot water for the bath that is inseparable from the miner's work, and so allow me to continue the process in privacy. On all sides I learn now that hardly a woman in the town but has grown up from childhood perfectly accustomed to seeing her father and brother doing their "bath-in" unconcernedly in the kitchen, which usually serves also for general dining-room and sitting-room.

"A greater cause of immorality it be than all else together—this kitchen bath-in," is the way all the young men support the statement of the woman speaker.

The obstacles in the way of the two-thirds vote<sup>f</sup> for the pit-head baths are considerable, apparently. At a recent national meeting a miner who proposed putting all the cost on the employers admitted that at some mines only fifteen per cent of the miners used them and at the most successful installation only fifty per cent. "How can a mon get his clothes dry—or mended?" "'E do be sure to take cold a-coomin' 'ome." These are the points heard, besides, of course, the one imported long ago from these regions into our American mines, namely, that it is decidedly unsafe and unhygienic for a miner to wash his back! Last night I met a youngster next to me in the meeting with whom this question had got past the stage of argument.

"Well, I *know* w'at 'appens. With me 'tis no argument. Both 'ave I tried, washin' and no washin'. And I *know* that washin' do give me a cold! So there ye are!"

It would seem to me that nothing would do so much to improve the men's respect for themselves as to put an end to this constant passing up and down the street in blackened clothes and faces. Certainly nothing would do so much to lessen the heavy burden on the women. Town sentiment certainly requires the housewife to have her



threshold on the street well soapstoned and all the brasses shining to the limit if she is to hold her head up among her neighbors—I wonder, by the way, if that’s the reason why the greatest compliment to the standing of a family and their respectability here is: “Tidy people, they are. Aye, fine and tidy they be!” The strange thing is that the social requirements seem quite fully to allow the keeper of the shining stones and brasses to appear at nearly all hours of the day as the last word of personal sloppiness and disorder. If it is true, as it very well may be, that the two requirements of both domestic and personal tidiness are mutually exclusive, it seems odd that there should not have been a strike against the domestic in favor of the personal cleanliness. At the very least, it would look as though the wives should get up a movement in favor of the pit-head baths. But it is altogether probable that they are as much the victims of the traditions of the opposition as are their husbands—and would be probably as much so in the matter of electricity, too.

At any rate, the mothers are not the only ones who pay the price of hard work for those traditions which favor daily dirty faces on the street and perennially dirty backs in the kitchen—unless wives or daughters wash them. The young girls help with the scrubbing, with a coarse waist, generally black, around them and a piece of rough sacking over their short skirts, their soapstones and brushes clasped firmly in hand. The still younger sisters are quite likely to be “nursing” the baby—with the youngster held to their waist by their way of folding a “nursin’ shawl” about them so as to give a free arm. In some cases the young nurse is scarcely larger than the nursed—using all her childish strength to lift her precious load to her little shoulder. How it can fail to stunt some of the loyal maids I cannot see.

Just at this moment—and for some days back—I must



confess I have been the victim of the bad mood which all this work induces in the bodies and minds of the women and children of the place. On all these days my landlady's temper—but perhaps it is something in me that helps my surrounding circumstances to put me on edge here in the house when I eat my meals in the little room where I can hear her scolding and shouting at her whimpering little girl of about a year and a half. Anyway, I'll not trust myself to blame her nor to tell more of it until I am less weary—and touchy—than at present. Perhaps, too, we are all of us a little on edge with the uncertainty of the situation generally. At any rate we are all hoping that the meeting to-night will give news that matters have taken a turn more favorable to quiet—also to work and wages. And now to the crier's party.

Thursday,  
July 22nd.

Peace—or, at least, near-peace—at last!

Nearly everybody seemed to be glad to get back to work again this morning. On the whole, more coal probably went up to-day than when the trouble was first starting. It's not over yet, but at any rate the deputation brought back to last night's meeting the news that the head officials had agreed to reduce the damages to the small sum of 150 pounds, with several weeks for the payment of it. At the same time the county leader of the union who was mainly responsible for the settlement of the affair told the meeting that they were all “down the drain” in the likelihood of their getting any damages from the company for sending them out of the mine after they refused to mark their cars. But nobody seemed to take that very hard as long as he and the others of the deputation had made it possible for everybody to go back to earning their money without losing their face, seeing that the management had given in and lessened the damages.

“Well, this do be a good thing, for it do show tha low sort of leaders we do ’ave ’ereabouts,” was the way some of the older and more conservative men put it this morning as we all walked our long black and hilly way into the “two foot nine.”

“Child’s play this been, I tell ’oo, all of it except the parts thot been constitootional,” put in another; “but no matter, when we all do make decision then we did ought to go together.”

“Aye, this county mon thot speaks us all so fair lawst night, ’e do go as do all the others. W’y, once ’e been the wildest Red in all the kentry—in jail ’e been, for months for cause of the Pandy riots. And now ’e do tell us to be reasonable and constitootional—now thot ’e ’ave the plan to be an M. P. (Member Parliament) and do get ’is ten pound the week from all on us.” Thus some of the leaders tried to get back at their cooler-headed adviser though he had got them out of their hole in what I thought a very considerate way.

“While I agree with the county secretary,” was the genteel way Caproni, the best educated of the Bolsheviks, put it, “that under ordinary circumstances we should keep to the constitution and the law, I insist that we are now in a state of war with the management, so that anything we can think of to embarrass them is, in a manner of speaking, constitutional, because in line with our fixed and determined policy of sabotage.”

But of course the point of it all is that with the threat of that dreadful 2,000 pound sterling damages no longer staring the crowd in the face, the Bolshies were powerless to get anything like the majority on their side for continuing the fight.

As nearly as I can discover, after making myself a living question-mark all over the mine and the town, just that is typical of the whole situation. Everywhere the men have

trotted out their phrases of the "proletariat," "class consciousness and class discipline," "operation for public service and not for private profit," etc., etc.—all with very marked pride in their manifest learning. But only a few questions have been needed to uncover in most cases some hidden sense of hurt and soreness arising out of some unpleasant experience with the management, a few months or a few years ago. In some cases the experience had happened, not to the worker himself at all, but to some one close to him, but nevertheless was causing the sore spot in his own mind and the squint in his own view-point. And in most of these cases the present manager has played a part and too often an unworthy part.

"Well, mony the time I 'ave 'ad a bawd place, ye oonderstand, awnd w'en I spoke to 'im 'e'd only say 'right you are, let it lie!' So for me it was on wi' the work or leave the town."

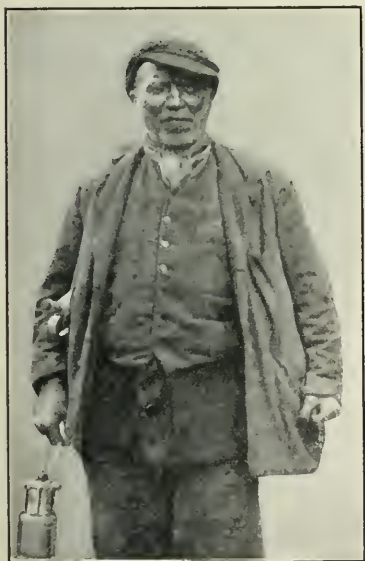
"Oh, aye, there be mony in the town as paid the twenty-one shillin' a month to buy the 'ouse from the company. And on account of no work, ye oonderstand—sometimes it did used to be, back in them days, only six or seven turns a fortnight's pay—they do lose all they pay." Something like this would come in rebuttal of the remarkable rent of company houses at a pound a month with sixteen hundredweight of coal thrown in.

"A six months' strike we 'ave just a twelvemonth after our marriage," said Mrs. Evans. "Long time it seemed for the two of us and this girl 'ere now. Without the shopkeepers to carry us, I don't know where we'd been." She speaks good English, having been born a "foreigner" to these parts—that is, in Birmingham. "As good a man he been now as he been bad before," she whispers about her husband as I take opportunity to express my admiration of her man. "And any one in town will tell you that I couldn't say more than that," she adds with some pride—



### SALT FIREMEN OF NORTHERN ENGLAND.

Workers everywhere were delighted to be "snapped" in their working togs, and always offered their addresses for copies. American sailors had evidently made it appear perfectly proper for an American worker to carry a camera.



"'E been now," his wife said, "as good a mon as 'e been bawd before—awnd no one could say more than thot!"



"Dirty Dick's my name, but I'm not dirty-minded."





pardonable in view of the report that she is the cause of her man's enjoying every one's respect for the past twenty years and more. (He will come into a pension of ten shilling weekly at seventy from the government, added to by the company to the extent of three or five shillings weekly according to his record and standing.)

Altogether it looks a good deal like the Irish question—present unhappiness induces the searching of the near and distant past for the fuller justification of its mood.

In the old days, too, the constant fatigue of the long hours of ripping a living from the black face of the coal seam must undoubtedly have helped to rub in deep whatever difficulties the workers may have had with those about them, whether in the management or out. The day certainly puts me in a position to believe that “having” coal in a deep mine is hard work. Any one will believe that who will come along and, after walking in the two miles from the “bottom,” take his “curlin’ box” in hand and follow after his buddy for trip after trip from the face to the tram, never perhaps straightening up because of the lowness of the seam, throwing the box high upon the “rise” or built-up sides of the piled-up tram, without daring to raise his head because of the low stony “top,” or else carrying some great lump carefully so as not to spoil its possibilities as a corner for the “rise”—always in a darkness which tires the eyes in spite of the oil safety-lamps and nearly always in the midst of a great deal of coal dust. Somehow all this has been much more tiring here than in the mines of America. Perhaps one reason is the narrower seam with the constant stooping. Of course the depth accounts for the greater heat, which is quite noticeable. The earth is said to grow hotter by one degree with every fifty feet of depth, and this mine is certainly not ventilated enough to offset its distance down as against the 300 and 400 feet depths in which we worked last year. Outside the smell of the coal

dust or the gas to be met with in the "back passages" where we worked last week, the other distinctive smell of these mines is undoubtedly the smell you get the moment you come near a miner—sweat, sweaty bodies, and sweat-drenched clothes.

This afternoon a young miner who was sleeping in the reading-room of the workmen's institute or hall said he thought most of the men were well tired every day. It is easy to believe that this sweat there in the darkness—which, by the way, with the dim oil lamps is reported by many to cause a great deal of eye trouble\*—helps make the mineworkers hard to get on with for the management. To-day I'll swear it must also make them hard to get on with in their homes.

This afternoon I had a lot of sympathy with old William Williams, of the North—old and fat he is—as he growled that he'd "ruther load another dram o' coal than walk these bloody miles down to the bottom." My own back and shoulders were aching because we had started off without stopping for a "blow" after we had piled the last tram high in double-quick time. After my kitchen "bathin'" and all through my lonely meal here at the house I have wanted to do some strenuous growling myself, not at the baby, for the little one seems to me quite good, but at the mother, who continues to-day her screams and shouts at the poor little tike.

"Shut up!" she yells at what seems very moderate babyish whimperings. "No, you cawn't 'ave it. So there you are!"—followed a moment later by the "Well, take it and be quiet!" of despairing surrender.

"Baby! Baby!" again a few moments later as something fresh is started. "Oh, I shall fair perish with you,

\* This disease of the eyes, I learn, is called "nystagmus," and has been the subject of many investigations by royal commissions. It is practically unknown among American miners.

you little slut!” (The woman is usually refined. It appears that usages vary in different parts of the English-speaking world.)

This is what has been wearing on me more than anything else, coming as it has on top of the ache of fatigue, the concentration of listening and recalling the conversations of the day, and a variety of other discomforts. I presume it is this constant scrubbing and washing up which is in turn at the bottom of the woman’s taking the poor child so hard, though something more serious would seem to be at the back of it. Anyway, one thing is certain; nobody in the town appears to have quite such a soft time as some of the papers make out, even if the men are for the present in no mood to work as hard as they used to—and are not likely to—until a lot of obstacles to their better understanding with the management are cleared up.

It appears to me still certain, however, that men generally—and miners particularly—prefer to work hard rather than to loaf unless they have for some reason or other got into a “jam” with each other or with the “gaffers,” as they call the bosses. To-day when we joined some of Willum’s old pals on the way out, he apologized for his puffings by boasting that: “Wull, in me day, I’ll do any job underground wi’ onybody, bar none!” A moment later it looked as though there might be blows between him and another old man who was certain Willum couldn’t make any showing in comparison with himself in handdrilling a powder-hole in the roof “an inch and a ’alf to start and three inches wide, oonderstawnd, two feet in.” “Swanking,” both of them, I suppose, but they were certainly taking pleasure in their workmanship, even though they tell me here that the best workers are the last to boast of it in public because of the tradition against manifest conceit. But at least it is a reassuring sign when, in such an upset situation as this, old men will refrain from their sabotage long enough

to boast of their prowess as workers—even if they have to go back into the past to get their basis for it.

Well, it is a relief to have no crier for a "General Meeting!" this evening. I must say the man does his job with as good a voice and enunciation as could be hoped for. "A sovereign a time 'e gets for it. Not bad, is it?" says my weary landlady.

So I guess I can go over for a cup of tea with the professor who is responsible for my being here—a fine man he is in every way, and most learned with regard to coal and many other matters.

Friday, July 23,  
Rhonda Coal Fields.

The biggest impression of the day—next to my aching arms and shoulder-blades—is of mud and rain. When I asked one of the miners—they are calling me Charlie very familiarly now—the why of the fearful mud of the yard about the pit-head he exploded:

"Seven deputations we have had on this bloody mud—and only been insulted for our pains. I tell you, you can't get nothing here except by force—and this week proves it."

"Five times I've been to them on the deputations," said black-haired Caproni. "Each time they've told us it was well irrigated by nature,—and ended by asking me why I kept making mischief. The thing they can never understand, these masters, is that we agitators cannot possibly *make* mischief. All we can do is to *call attention to it when they themselves furnish us with it!*"

Such words are exactly in line with my earlier belief that an agitator is "a man who earns his salt by rubbing it into the sore spots which the rest of us allow to exist on our body politic—or industrial." I hope, however, that the man was wrong when he continued: "Yes, we are back at work again—and I think we owe it to the man who threw the brick through the agent's window. The only language



they can understand, these owners, is the language of force and violence, else why did they issue the summons in the first place?”

I “dunno” what the answer is, but I am mighty sure that the fellow is no fool. He told me this morning he had been working hard for a living since he was nine. That, in addition to his illegitimacy, would make him resemble most agitators, in having been pinched severely in “the fell clutch of circumstance.” It is pretty certain that he would be very glad if the coming ballot would defeat the effort to raise the dues of membership in the Miners Federation of Great Britain to a shilling weekly. This would set the Welsh miners free to run themselves—with their more radical leadership in control. They would also be free to get a higher daily wage than other miners if they insisted on the local pre-war arrangement whereby wages went up or down with the selling price of coal, an arrangement very advantageous now to the Welsh, who mine most of the high-priced export coal. Such separation would be a blow in the back to the “M.F.G.B.” now that it has recently voted to demand of the government the rescinding of the fourteen shillings twopence allowed the coal producer and seller on every ton of coal for British use and the addition of two shillings per day to the wages of all miners—besides threatening to “down tools” if this is not granted. In addition, the same conference stated that it will pay no attention whatever to the law in case the government passes the proposed Mines Act for setting up joint management and workers’ committees and for regulating wages and other conditions according to areas, thus getting away from the need of dealing with the national union.

At the face the day passed quite quickly and with a lot of work done because old Willum goes to-night on a “’oli-day.” So far he has not given me a chance at a pick.



He's not to blame so much for that, if I am right in observing that a greenhorn might easily get in great danger by loosening more of the great coal cliff than he bargained for. But though he believes in teaching only by the method of "watch me, that's the best ye cawn do," he is at least always hard on the job of looking out for my safety.

That's not a good subject to write about from day to day because it isn't wise to speak too soon—at least it would not seem so in this district where every day's paper has a head-line or two like yesterday's "ENTOMBED 10 HOURS!" or "Merthyr Haulier's Death Mystery." But I guess I'm near enough through to thank the old man for his call to me to-day, for instance, with his kindly "Go you now away from a'-elphin' o' them drillers. Bad roof it is—dangerous even for them wi' experience," as also for his earlier injunctions to "Allus keep your cap on: ye nae can tell."

As we have walked out the miles to the bottom together the men have been quick to yell to me when the trains or "journeys" ("trips" in American mines) have come thundering along in the black headings:

"Into the manhole! Quick wi' ye!" followed, perhaps, by "Like the 'Irish Mail' they do coom. . . . The coort will be decidin' to-morrow whether Jack Jones gets damages for bein' 'urted even w'en 'e wuz in one o' them bloody man'oles." (Young Sanders tells with great relish of the miner on a spree in Cardiff who saw a group of West Indian negroes approaching and called to his chum: "Quick, Jock, 'ere cooms a journey o' coal! Into the monhole wi' ye!")

The professor says that the same roof which permits the "long wall" system here also furnishes greater danger than anywhere in the British Isles—"and so requires more intelligent workmen," which hardly includes me! The wire "ropes," he also says, constitute another factor of great danger and walking near them when in action is for-

bidden by law. I will confess they have frightened me with their roar just above my head in the darkness. But the men pay no attention to them and walk out when they are in action. The observance of the law would make them wait till the end of the shift in the unlighted places quite distant from the shaft. As it is, they line up by the hundreds a good half-hour before the hoist stops taking up the loaded trams of coal—in spite of all the management can do to get them to give a better day's work. With the trams of coal finally brought to the shaft and then “caged up” to the surface, we line up for our turn at the cage, after braving the whirrings of the ropes at one spot and pausing to listen for any further doings in the “top” at some point where rock has fallen on the tracks within the previous half-hour. Then I notice the colliers—the real getters of coal—taking a certain amount of precedence over the hauliers and us day men—as becomes those whom, in a sense, all the others of us serve. I wonder if that is likely to continue in case the Bolshies bring about the extinction of piece-work, for that will make the collier's earnings no longer larger than the others.

In a mine it is impossible to imagine anything like the constant supervision over the effort of the workers from hour to hour which is relied upon in many factories to make up for the urging which is supplied ordinarily by piece rates. In a coal-mine everybody is working more or less by himself, with the five or six hundred workers who use the same shaft spread over several miles of territory. If he wants to, a man can spend the whole day hardly turning a hand—and then frame some excuse to the over-man later. This same difficulty is also at the bottom of the trouble with piece rate or tonnage; they call it here “payment by results.” In the old days, it appears, the “master” had only a few workers and could easily take a look at the face of the coal seam when a man complained that it was re-

quiring more than proper effort to earn a fair weekly pay. The master knew his man and his man knew him. If it was agreed that the location was bad the man would be allowed to "work on the con"—that is, be given special consideration for his unsatisfactory place. When the mine grew too big to permit such relationships, a foreman or "gaffer" had to make the decision and the old face-to-face relationship was ending and industrial troubles were beginning.\* There were many instances of managerial tyranny. This finally brought the union's demand—the miners' union began as early as 1841—for the recognition of "abnormal" places. There is always much difficulty in agreeing just when a place is really abnormal, for when a place goes harder than usual the miner is often apt to do considerably less than his best in order to make his case as good as possible. Now, after years of the unsatisfactoriness following on that real difficulty, the minimum wage has been put into operation. Theoretically it was to take care only of the worker who has an "abnormal" place, but at the present moment it is being taken advantage of as a payment, not for those who have bad places, but for any who do not care to work! Also by the Bolshies who claim that it can't be right for the fortunate man to put himself above a brother worker who may be working harder than he in some less remunerative location.

The question I am anxious to ask the heads of the miners' union is whether they believe the miner can be relied upon, under either private or public operation, to give, without the spur of payment by results, enough coal in a day's work to hold the circle of British industry together. Unless something can be found to get better relations than at pres-

\* The assignment of the location by the superintendent can, of course, make or break a miner. The way is therefore open to the playing of favorites or the venting of spites, as also, sometimes, the purchasing of the virtue of the miner's wife.

ent, I don't see how it can be done. Why any one should suppose that the presence of miners' representatives on the National Board of Control would make government operation much more efficient than now in the “phones” and telegraph I cannot understand. The sad thing is, that as in the case of the union's check—weighman in America or the county union official here—these “high up” representatives become distrusted by the rank and file, as soon as they begin to react to their responsibilities, by growing conservative.

I am more than ever convinced to-night that “there's a reason” behind even the strangest ideas and actions of our fellow humans. When understood, this reason makes the conduct of any one of us about as logical as that of any other of us. A London alienist, Dr. Hart, shows for instance how the behavior of the insane is perfectly reasoned and logical, granting only the reasonableness of just one tiny idea or conception which for some definite reason gets itself into the patient's train of thought and so proceeds to provide a perfectly logical cause of all the others that follow. To-night I feel as though I had found the reason for my fretful landlady. As a result of that diagnosis which is always the biggest step toward cure, I have tried my best to help her avoid the tragedy which looms ahead of her and her family.

“Ah, it's tired I am all the time now—and not carin'—except to die.” So she has explained, perhaps realizing the strain of her shoutings at the baby, though she is probably quite unconscious of the multitude of times I have heard her repeating “Oh dear! Oh dear!” under her breath with the deepest of sighs, as she served my everlasting bacon and eggs in the morning.

“Often and often John says: ‘Shan't we go out as we used to?’ But never do I 'ave the courage. So it 'as been ever since the twins came—after eight years with no child



at all. . . . Hours and hours I sit by the stove 'ere and cry and cry—cry me eyes out—and never for no reason at all. Yes, it was a bye we wanted and when both 'e and the girl come, we was the 'appiest in the world. But I do be thinkin' it was too good. . . . 'Twas a Sunday night I noticed first. All night I sat up with 'im in me arms. And on Tuesday 'e was dead. . . . Per'aps some time 'twill be another—and a bye. But per'aps I'll be dead then, too, I'm sure I don't care—I'm too tired out to care. Never a day 'ave I enjoyed life since they were born—and not because I 'aven't loved them. . . . I don't know why. The doctor says I just need a rest, but you can see there's none of that 'ere—with the dirt and all."

As she talked I felt sorry for the times these last few days when I had leaned wearily on the edge of the kitchen "bosh," or porcelain sink, preparatory to the "bathin" after the day in the pit, and wanted to scream when the mildest kittens would let out the mildest feline inquiries and appeals—and felt positively relieved, a moment later, that the wife had herself yelled to the poor pussy: "Oh you shut up!" For her to yell seemed somehow to relieve me of the strain.

It is perfectly plain that in the course of a year or two the ambitious husband will begin to be more conscious of the unsatisfactoriness of his once handsome wife (so I judge from her picture) and begin to sigh for some more sympathetic companion. She is already, of course, visiting on him her bad temper—or, at least, her unhappy mood following from this continual weariness. It hardly seems too much to say that what was an attractive and happy young married woman less than two years ago is becoming at this moment, before the eyes of her husband and friends, a very shrew. I have urged a specialist, with all my might, but both that and the rest prescribed by the local doctor are apparently equally unlikely.



At least I'm glad I did hold my temper this afternoon and the other times when I have wanted to make some sort of a nasty "come-back," not to the whimpering baby but to its troubled mother.

By George, but this combination of body and soul into what we call a person is an interesting matter! It does look as though we ought to give more study to this combination than we have yet given if we are going to find ways of helping it into better and nobler living. And the start of all that would appear to be, for all of us who have to deal with other humans, whether in small groups or great, to hang upon the walls of our minds the legend "There's a reason!"

It's bedtime even though it is still fairly light. Like most other nights here, apparently, it is raining and cold—with a continuous new supply of rain clouds blowing over the mountains at the top valley and down right into the town. The only living things that appear to like the constant chill and mud are the numerous flock of dirty gray geese that noisily parade the streets and alleys. A perfect picture of misery is made by the piteously bleating sheep and lambs that wander forlornly from one garbage pile to the other about the place at all hours of the day and night. Just outside the window now some lonely wool-clad youngster—born into the world merely to furnish a reason for his due portion of mint sauce!—is ma-a-ing piteously in a voice amazingly like a boy soprano's. The poor thing evidently feels as far from its friends as a certain other person who could be named!

Rhondda Region,  
Sunday, July 25.

Thanks to my good friend the professor, have had a wonderful ride in a motor all over this southeastern part of Wales. Beautiful country it is, too. With him was one of the company officials and owners here, a man who has

lived all his life in this town and has gone from the bottom to the head of one of the country's most successful collieries. To take the drive without being observed by my buddies it was necessary to stay out of the pit Saturday and join them a little outside the town.

Among other places we saw the only pit-head shower baths in Wales—in full operation on husky, coal-black bodies which certainly looked as though they needed them. Unfortunately the capacity of the building does not permit serving more than a third of the workers—due mainly to the shortage of room for the clothes, which are hung upon hooks and then drawn up for drying in the warm air near the ceiling. Was glad to be told by some of the “bath-ers”—our “bathers” is a word which refers only to those who are taking a sea or river bath, or as the saying here is, a sea or river “*bathe*”—that many more would like to use the accommodations if they could, although there are still many who are afraid of taking cold.

At all the other collieries of the company the officials were quite discouraged with the attitude of the workers:

“What can we do when a dozen men refuse to work Sunday for the repairing of the sheaves?” [The sheaves are the pair of wheels always visible at the top of a mine tittle, serving as pulleys for the wire cables which run from the winding drum inside the engine-house, down into the shaft.] “By that they make it necessary for five hundred of their companions to lose two eight-hour shifts! . . . More machinery? Yes, but the men will refuse to work with the machine for undercutting the coal. That in spite of the fact that actual experience has shown that the colliers earn more with the help of it wherever its use is practicable!”

The tour only emphasized the impression, gained earlier from the train through this district, that the housing conditions are much better than would easily be found in

an American colliery area. All the houses are closely built of brick and stone. Except for a few bad back streets they are quite fairly attractive and all seem to have some sort of indoor plumbing. For miles and miles we were scarcely out of sight of one of the well-built and bustling mine towns.

“Most of the houses we are renting to our officials and workers were built,” says the head official, “nearly fifty years ago and represented an investment of only sixty or eighty pounds each. That’s why we can rent them so cheaply. . . . Over 1,500 of our 5,000 men own their own homes and some 2,000 of them have been with us as much as twenty-five years or more.”

Whether the men or the managers are to blame, the conditions of work *inside* the mine seem to me less attractive here than in the mines I saw in America. The managers here are said to be quite slow to adopt either the mechanical conveyors used at the face on the long-wall system in many mines, or the water system for packing the muck into the goaf or gob for the later support of the mine roof. Of course the better this is packed the less material has to be taken up and out onto the dumps, which not only represent costly handling but also everywhere disfigure the handsome landscape. Also the less the countryside is bothered by the subsidence of the ground when the timber supports give way. You certainly get an impression of the age of the coal industry here when you see the hugeness of some of these dumps—also when you see the old upright engines which still operate at some of the pits with a conical drum. This was an old attempt to give maximum pulling power on the cage when at the bottom, and maximum speed when the cage is just descending from the top.

My two companions have certainly shown me every imaginable courtesy. More hospitable or friendly people—more Christian in every way—could not be thought of.

They are sorry there is not time to get acquainted with "the back-bone of the Rhondda"—the miners who are beyond middle age, own their own homes, never drink, seldom go to the union meetings, and never absent themselves from the chapels or the churches. They agree, however, that something like a year's sojourn would be required to get close to them—also that during last week these in our town and at our pit accepted the leadership of the Bolshies. Still they contend that very few of this old type work in that particular pit, partly because the living conditions I have thought so good are much worse than those in the other part of the town.

But I am quite willing to agree with them that the typical Welsh miner is a mighty fine citizen, anxious to do the right and play fair as he is able to see fairness. I am positively blue at the thought of saying good-by to-morrow or next day to some of the good friends I have made here, including particularly the professor and his dear wife, the official, then "the boss" of that first forlorn and homesick night among these great hills and by no means the last, the repairer and his wife. These folks of the valley, whether high or humble, are not ashamed to show their friendly feelings—that's sure. Big-handed and big-hearted men they seem to be, with a strain of sentiment that has to have, I judge, the additional outlet of Welsh poetry and song. The authors of some of the poetry appearing in the local papers are often very humble miners. A male chorus from the local collieries here once got the national prize, sang before the Queen, toured America, and so on. They think rather badly of our American taste when some second-rater here goes out to us and in a few years writes back that he is at the head of musical interests in some Middle Western or Eastern town! Cleaner of speech they all are, too, than most American workers as I have seen them.

Most of these men seem to me worthy, I must say, of those words the wife said of “the boss” that first day here: “He would do good to all men that ’e do know, ’e would.” It was when we were looking at the chromos of the family in the sacred—and unused—parlor there in what the men called “Gaffer’s Row” of company officials’ houses. Sacred the parlor really is in that house because it shows the faces of the two children—the boy of seventeen and the girl of twenty-one—who had died within the last year or two. “Ah, when the bye went it fair knocked the boss. Ever since thot ’e been gettin’ old fast.”

But even she is puzzled by the times and the spirit growing up around them—as doubtless are a great many of the fine old type.

“More wickedness there is now than before, I don’t know why. Oh, aye, they bet on the ’orses and on everything else—like the number o’ the next tram thot coomes. They even bet on what the minister’s text will be—and then even on the number o’ the ’ymns! Awnd why they been so restless and trouble-makin’ I’m fair put to it to know.”

Her puzzlement is pretty much my own at this moment. Whether they are numerous or not, the more radical workers undoubtedly do have a lot of influence in this whole neighborhood. Every day’s conversations make it plainer that in this particular pit they are clever enough to make use of the unfortunate experiences most of them appear to have had with that same agent or superintendent earlier mentioned. Elsewhere in the district something else must be found to account for the spirit of unrest so general in South Wales and especially in the South Wales coal-fields. It can hardly be simply the black past of two generations ago in mining in general, because that would be equally true for the fields in the English Midlands, reported much more conservative. It may be that, as one of the rev-



olutionists suggested the other day, these mountains tie everybody to a very narrow groove and make the local miner less open to the currents of national and international interest which are evidently blowing on the faces of the miners of England.

One thing I have noticed—that to most of the radicals the whole thing seems to have that delightful simplicity which appears only to the eye of the ignorant. As we came out of the pit the other morning, the same chap who had told how the Russians had “got educated since the war, so why shouldn’t we?”—all, be it observed, in the twinkling of an eye!—went on very knowingly to show how simple the whole change was here:

“You see, afore the war we used to earn our livin’ by ’ere” (pointing to his arm), “but now we does it by ’ere!” (with a very impressive finger to his head!)

He is the same one who is perfectly sure that the larger use of coke and its by-products is giving the operators even larger profits than before. Evidently he has not the faintest idea that not all coals are cokable and very few from this region. In short, his arguments are those of a man who has been primed by leaders and teachers who evidently talked now about the present, now about the past, and again about the future without telling him when they were shifting gears from one into the other. The one sure thing is that he is greatly impressed with his information, though he has constantly to refer to his “teachers” for the exact details: “They’ll tell ye the exact number o’ millions o’ profit. I cawn’t recall ’em.”

All of which makes me wish that the employers would think more about education and less about force as the way out and over the present misunderstanding. In view of all that has already happened, however, it isn’t strange that neither side feels like stopping the fight.

“We have to decide,” said a high official, “whether we

will give in to the men and give over all thought of management—and profit—or, on the contrary, make a fight for every inch. The slightest show of good-will is taken either as a surrender to their superior force or as some sham for getting them into our toils. 'If the management proposes it, it must be bad for us!' they say—as, for instance, when we proposed to make a gift toward the hospital. It's now going up over there—some six years after they first started fighting it."

A moment later my heart sank as he continued: "*And when things cool off a bit we'll summon them all for damages for those missed days this past week.*"

When I made bold to suggest that they require their trouble-making official to restrict himself to the duties of his recent promotion and put more authority to deal with the men onto his subordinates, the answer was discouraging: "But no one can possibly know the men or be more sympathetic with them than he; *for he used to be one of them!*" (Which isn't necessarily true at all, and is often the reverse.) Then he went on: "And besides many of our subordinate officials we can't trust—not so much as we can many of our workers!"

'Twould appear that the chief factor in the trouble—if any of my "Big Four" are here—is not to be found in the unsteady job. Ordinarily the mines run very regularly, so I'm told. Car supply is so good that if a mine stops on that account it is wired all over the country. "Tiredness and temper from bad working or living conditions" is hardly a main cause of the local trouble, though it helps. The mental factor of misunderstanding certainly figures considerably in spite of the fact that these men and managers have all grown up together. For the local problem, at least, it appears evident that the chief trouble is caused by the men's feeling that the agent and their self-respect cannot get on together; at least that feeling is evidently giving the

Bolshies their handle and, judging from the attitude of my official friend, is likely to continue to do so for some time.

Altogether it looks pretty hopeless—especially considering that the Bolshies will probably do their utmost to keep the management from taking the game out of their hands by any efforts, to get into good relations with the men.

Meanwhile, partly because of this situation and partly because of the government's effort to restrict the exporting of coal, ships cannot "bunker" nor find return cargoes after bringing in from France the pit timber for the mines or from Spain the iron for the mills. This increases freight rates and thus raises the cost of living. The same England that used to export coal all over the world is getting it now from Africa, the United States, and even from Australia, 12,000 miles away—with China waking up and breaking into things with the newly arranged delivery of 100,000 tons of the black fuel at Marseilles and 10,000 tons sold to the Danish state railways! It looks as though England's "key commodity" was in a bad way. Mention is often made of the amount of coal we have in America that can be worked by the steam shovels in our open-pit mines, yet it does seem odd that our tons per man per year should be so much more than they are here—with our 735,000 miners getting out something like 700,000,000 tons against Great Britain's 1,200,000 miners getting only about 230,000,000 tons! And on top of that, there is a serious possibility that a strike of all the miners here will be declared before the end of August! Also a six-hour day instead of seven comes, I understand, into effect automatically next summer! With the seven-hour day 220,000 miners here in Wales have produced a million tons less than 207,000 miners produced last year on an eight-hour day.

If the present feeling here against piece-work or tonnage payment gets its way, the whole industry as I see it will commit hari-kari—with its pick and shovel as it were.

And, as I see it, little enough salvation is to be expected from government operation, too many workers are expecting to go easy and "tike no chawnces" then. If the leaders play into the hands of the Bolsheviks by working for this flat-day rate, the dispute will be quieter but the mines will be duller. In any event, it is certainly urgent that some means be taken to get the men into a better mood. Perhaps one way would be for the government to call a conference and while it asks the men to give a better day's work, ask the owners to take steps to improve their methods of operation. This latter, however, would probably meet the opposition of the great mass of workers. They appear pretty generally to believe that every man born in a mine town has a more or less inalienable right to a miner's job and the enjoyment of a miner's full year's pay, even if machinery might get the work done with only four or five days' work each week. It would also get slight favor from the operators. Naturally they feel skittish about investing millions in equipment with the sword of nationalization hanging over their heads. So, as everybody over here says in a pinch, "And there you a'y!" Which, being interpreted, means "And there you aren't!"

'Twill be fine to see the English coal-fields and the feelings of the men that work them.

A fellow can't live in this district—or for that matter in Britain anywhere, without getting coal pretty deep into his system. The pillars of British trade and commerce—indeed of British life—rest on these seams of British coal—and so upon the muscles and the "mentals" of the hardy men that shovel these precious seams to the surface and into the country's ships and fire-boxes.

But more about coal when we get to Yorkshire.



Newport, S. Wales,  
Wednesday, July 27.

It was a weary day yesterday; with the strain of the pits behind it, it made a movie here last night look attractive. But get away from the labor problem! No bloomin' fear—as the expression goes here. Just when the plot was getting interesting, with the villain about to get his proper handling, a slide came on, announcing in a hurried scrawl:

"In view of the strike of the laborers at the municipal generating station, the lights and power of the trams and all the city will be turned off in four minutes. Good Night!"

Everybody went to bed by candle-light. Even this morning the good nature of everybody has been amazing. A majority of the workers of the town of 30,000 people is said to be put out of work because eighty maintenance-of-way men—practically unskilled labor—are asking for 2/1 per hour. That is several pence in advance of workers of the same grade in neighboring cities.

Over in the great dock district steamers from Japan or Australia are to be seen alongside sailing boats, or "wind-jammers," from the Argentine. The trouble is that there is nothing like the proper number of them. Everybody is complaining. The reason is coal—no coal. A prominent M. P. of Cardiff states publicly that an additional reason is the high rates and low energies of the district's unionized workers. These, he claims, are driving many ships to get their repairing done at Antwerp and Rotterdam, especially now that no bunkers can be filled with coal except after the greatest and most annoying and expensive delay. Some 3,000 dockers and other ship workers here are said to be facing starvation. It is a sad sight to see hundreds of them there at the hiring offices by the gate of the huge dock.

"Bloody few they're tykin' on, with all them a comin'



out," said one big fellow as we saw about thirty coming from the hiring office to rejoin their fellows in the crowd.

"Not livin', I eyen't—just bloody lingerin', I calls it," answered another hotly when I asked if he made his living there on the docks. "Not one bloody hower of work 'awve I 'ad in ten weeks!"

It seems a heavy price to pay for the sabotage and unhappiness of my recent buddies.

These docks must have been a busy place in war time when many cruisers and torpedo-boats came here for overhauling, and when 5,000 girls worked at repairing the boxes for holding shell cartridges, returning them in good order to the munitions factories and the front. This last week a man was cleaning up the weeds that now grow there—they are threatening now to grow on the docks themselves! The poor fellow cut into a stray shell which proceeded to kill him and wound his mate.

Yesterday a visit to one of the district's noted steel towns permitted a good look at the long valley-filling plant which has lately been claiming the largest blast-furnaces in the world and promising "the cheapest steel in the world." *Largest in Europe* proves the correct title: the two big furnaces are being put up according to American patents by American contractors. Most of the steel is made by Bessemers which will get their "hot metal" from these furnaces. Thirty thousand men work there, though most of them dig coal from right under the plant. The open-hearths are small and hand-charged. The papers say, however, that a million pounds sterling is being spent in new equipment and development, in addition to the opening up of a new ore-field in Northamptonshire to increase the supply now being got from Spain.

The open-hearth helpers or "hands" on the "smelters" were heartily glad to be done, since a year ago in March, with the twelve-hour shift. They do not seem to have

known it in its prime, that is, with the seven-day week, for they used to knock off for week-end and only take an occasional Sunday or Saturday afternoon turn looking after the gas. Sounds mighty pleasant!

Strangely enough, the manager of the smelting stage was the only man still working the long turn-in order, I suppose, to share his responsibility and his income with only one assistant.

"Not for two jobs like this would I give up my membership in the Union of Smelters and in the Officials Association!" was his surprising answer.

The general manager of the plant is said to be one of the coming men of the country. One of his assistants is trying to put into operation his ideas about better industrial relations, and has about 4,000 workers paying twopence per week toward a sports field, some classes, etc., while the majority of the officials are sure the plan won't work, and the workers mostly wonder what dodge the manager is up to now.

The working conditions looked to me quite bad.

"The biggest reason we can't treat the men as well as we'd like at the pay window, for instance, is because our pay-clerks like so jolly well to rub into the other workers their own superiority. All of these clerks are, of course, members of the clerks' union themselves, so that we have to be jolly careful what we say." This was the answer of a young official to whom the assistant was good enough to introduce me.

An energetic young man in charge of coal operations stopped off with two years' study at Boston Tech largely because English law requires of all operating officials a full five years of actual mine experience. That evidently discourages full scientific study by making full preparation too long.

"Yes, you can get work, I dare say," people in the town

and at the furnaces said, "but it's a bally sight harder to find lodgin's. Men leave every day on that account."

"*Wanted*—Men for France, Malay States, Gold Coast, Nigeria and Nyasa Land," was the note on the Ministry of Labor's Exchange.

"We'll put you in touch with the London office of these foreign employers if you wish," the clerks told me when I inquired, "but you'll have no trouble getting on here at the works if you like." I shook my head, having in mind both the apparent impossibility of getting a bed in the town and the necessity of getting acquainted with other parts of Britain.

A young laborer who called himself a navvy and looked it, spent the twenty miles or so into Newport boasting of his luck in picking up a street laborer's job in twenty minutes. But he said he would only "stick it" the week because of the costliness and slowness of the trains back and forth.

Meanwhile I feel with the man yesterday on the train near Northhyr-Tidville who lives in a very poverty-stricken looking steel town in this district:

"I want to go back to America where I fought at San Juan Hill and saw Admiral Cervera's boats get knocked up, one by one—and where a man's kiddies get a much better chance than here. This country's bad for two reasons, taxes and weather."

So endeth the First Episode.

If the others are anything like it, I'll be wanting to tell every employer in America something like this: "Be careful you don't play into the hands of the unions by trying to keep your relations with great groups of workers entirely on the old individualistic basis, denying them the right of some kind of collective or representative dealing through shop committees or otherwise. *But* don't let *any* form of representative dealing, whether with shop committees or

unions, cause you to forget for one moment the prime importance of maintaining close personal and individual contacts and relationships between your workers and the company as personified to the men in your carefully chosen and continuously trained foremen. Continue to build these representatives of the company and to hold up their hands so that through them the men will know what the company itself looks like—and so that they *will like its looks*. Consider every individual grievance that comes to the committees a proof of a failure of those representatives of you and the company—that is, of every foreman and other officer to perform properly his true function as contact-point interpreters. In other words, have the committees or the union as a guarantee of your good faith, but try to make them, so far as possible, unnecessary to the happiness and self-respect and efficiency of the men. If you can't do this, don't blame the leaders too much for building up the collective plan into a wall between yourselves and your individual constituents."

That may sound reactionary. I don't believe it is as I mean it. At any rate, it is sure to occur to any one who sees the extent to which management and the individual workers are walled off from each other here—to the endangering of the whole country's industry and life.

Saturday, July 31st,  
Whitechapel, London.

Within a few hours the train starts for pastures new.

Am glad to be carrying away at least one answer to that puzzling question: "Is something wrong with education here, that the undersized boys in the steel and coal towns of South Wales seem to think it absurd to keep at it after their fourteenth birthday?"

"Well, why should they stay longer?" says an Oxford graduate at the settlement where I have been staying.



“Just as a miner stated to me: ‘If I give my boy more schooling he’ll not earn a farthing more as a miner for it, and all he can become is a clerk [pronounced “clark”] or a teacher. And at either of these he’ll earn considerably less than as a miner. So there you are!’ . . . Ah, yes, the shortage of jobs, even for men of advanced education, is most serious, I do assure you. Unless he goes into civil service here or in the colonies—at low salary, though with considerable security and a pension—there’s very little a highly educated man can do. I think I may say that my war service in the ——— Department was rather exceptional, but whenever I talk with any official about an opening in trade along that line, I am assured that they are held either for relatives of influential people, or for those few—very few, I assure you—who may work up from the bottom. I am told on all sides that I could get a very good berth in America with my experience, but with my sisters I can’t very well pull up.”

There seems to be general agreement with him, which makes it again apparent that educational facilities do not amount to a great deal in a country unless there are also opportunities for the use—the *profitable* use of them—that means in terms of jobs. Part of the trouble, no doubt, comes from the fact that the higher education here is mostly classical. At the ——— Rolling Mills, in Ohio, some tests showed that the chief trouble makers were men who were doing hand jobs when they were fitted and anxious to do head jobs. I wonder if by any chance some of the “intellectuals” here who are at or near the head of the Socialist and similar labor groups, even though they are well-to-do and have never worked, are men who fitted themselves in the universities for the most important kind of intellectual work, and then failed to find it. Whether this is so or not, I am certain that in America we must keep an eye on the invention of machinery and the constant improvement of



jobs as well as of our educational facilities in order to avoid trouble. The two must go hand in hand—education and the jobs that give opportunity for those who have taken advantage of it.

By one of the secretaries to Lloyd George—thanks to a letter of introduction, I had tea with him yesterday—it was stated that this whole industrial situation is now improving since the war, because the university graduates are more and more going into business here as in the States.

The secretary looks like an idealist, but a very practical one—altogether a very fine type of young man. He thinks that in spite of Bolshevism's claims, the world has pretty much established the general principle of political democracy, with attention now required only for the details of better representation, etc. The really big job, therefore, is some workable and properly productive establishment of *industrial* democracy. This is going to be not a national but an international problem. For instance, the International Miners Conference this very week is proposing at Geneva, Switzerland, the universal adoption of the six-hour day and five-day week, a world-wide "down-tool" for miners to stop war, etc. (Tom Shaw, a British Labor M. P., who is the chairman there, by the way, speaks French and German fluently!)

"The labor party here, of course, can't fail to have its policy on all sorts of international problems, because these all come so close to the British worker. . . . On the matter of our following America in going dry, I wish you would let me have a memo of your ideas and suggestions after you have seen conditions in Scotland, and I'll send them to Lady Astor. She is very keen on it."

"Your secretary friend's boss, Lloyd George, is getting away from the people by giving undue hearing to the opinions of such men as Carson and Bonar Law, because they can control votes in the House," said later the newspaper

man whose suggestion in Kansas City is responsible for my being over here. Then he added, following his recent trip to Ireland:

"Things seem to be getting worse instead of better in the Irish muddle. Still I am in close touch with some of the leading Sinn Feiners, who tell me they would consent to Dominion Home Rule except for the promise they have given to the American servant girls, who have invested several million dollars in the bonds of the Irish Republic, and they can't back down until they're fought down."

"We almost never have any cases of discharge of a sort that would give any basis for the workers' appeal," said the manager of a big department store the same afternoon. Apparently the discharging of a person from any job here in England is an enormously more serious thing than at home. Of course it should be, because *getting* a job is so much more serious.

"Our working people are leaving the unions," said a noted French engineer and manufacturer met at dinner. "The extremists got control and tried to have a general strike on May 1. But the power was not off three minutes because every citizen had quietly been told his position to assume when the workers went out. And that citizens' organization—it is smiled at, or what you say, winked at, by the government—is now permanent, and the workers say now: 'Let us bargain. What is the use to strike?'"

At the play afterward the comedians imparted the information that as a matter of fact "*Madam Butterfly*" was the mother not of one but of *thirteen* children!—because—"Well, you see, their father was an American, and naturally, of course, he believed in mass production!"

Anyway, I stood up straighter this afternoon and lifted my hat when the bus drove by the new St. Gaudens statue, whose pedestal bore no date and no statement of any sort,

only the name "*Abraham Lincoln*." The papers are printing—just to show how so many things go back to jobs—the splendid letter he wrote to the Lancashire cotton-mill workers, expressing gratitude for their loyalty to the cause of freedom for the slaves, even though the blockade of the Southern ports was closing the mills and threatening them with starvation.

I only wish more Americans could foil a certain American newspaper owner and the Irish anti-British propagandists generally, by going through the chapels of Westminster Abbey and so coming to feel how definite is our inheritance of many splendid memories via England, and so a part of our own as well as Britain's history. It's the best place for stretching hands across the centuries as well as across the seas I know, also the best sixpence worth of good history in the world.

## CHAPTER IV

### "WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH GLASGOW?"

Glasgow,  
Saturday, August 7.

MIGHTY poor, for sure, are the prospects for getting any job in these parts.

A letter from a London official to one of the biggest steel men here secured good treatment, but the "labor superintendent" was unwilling to risk trouble with his men by putting me into the plant as a laborer. So to-morrow I am to meet his shop-steward, a man elected by the workers, in what seems to be the largest and most progressive steel plant of the city.

The official says it was during the war that he was put in charge of all wage disputes, as well as all hirings and firings. Of these last I'll warrant "they ain't any." Just last week I was told that the railway workers who had been convicted of long-continued stealing,—the thefts including five-hundred-dollar pianos,—had, nevertheless, been kept on the job at the insistence of the National Union of Railwaymen! It appears that during the war this steel company got the reputation of having the most unruly workers of this whole unruly district. At present the "labor superintendent" is quite certain that this group is much happier and is helping to make the whole district more quiet. His men run well into the thousands.

"We are trying to fix everything now so that the extremists have no bad conditions to point to, though that sometimes requires my 'letting a foreman or superintendent down' where he's done wrong. We try to keep grievances

from getting so far along as to call for union treatment. But we are lucky in having in British steel a conservative and reliable general union—outside the tradesmen's unions like the engineers, builders, etc. What we'll have when Hodges, Pugh, and the other good leaders die, I don't know, but anyway, we must play with them and we are glad to play with them. . . . I'm trying to get away from the term 'payment by results,' or 'piece-work.' The men don't like it because they say it pulls them apart when one man manages to get a lot more—or less—than the chap right next to him. But they are liking our plan of 'Co-operative or Group Bonus.' By means of this the whole gang shares the results of the whole gang's production. By it they'll get more than the union gives, provided they all work together to get out the steel."

At another big plant, in a sort of steel suburb, a letter got me to the works manager. But both he and his big deputy manager (formerly a union representative) were unwilling to take any chance of upsetting their good relations with their workers by putting on the job any one who might be thought a spy.

"Most of our several thousand men are in the general steel worker's union, and ye could na stay long wi'out joining. In thirty years it's no trouble we have had—except with the tradesmen's unions. If a man has complaint it is decided by two representatives from both sides, and two neutral chairmen. It has worked well. The Clyde district? Ah, thot's dufferent. Most of the trouble there has come from the general (common) laborers, and they are largely Irish. . . . And there, too, it is so important to give the men no cause, ye oonderstand, thot it is fair oonlikely that ony employer will hire ye."

The surprising thing over here is the way a distance of twelve miles, as in this case, seems to make the situation entirely different. These officers must surely have reason



for thinking that they are not in the Clyde-bank class at all, at all. It is a little easier to understand when I recall the number of miner folk back in the Rhondda for whom the longest trip of their lives took them perhaps to Cardiff or Swansea!

On the way back to town it was hardly possible to understand the Scotchiness of some colliery boys who were coming in for this afternoon’s field sports. By dint of highly concentrated listening it became, finally, possible to learn that a “guid mon and a braw worker—at the face, ye mind, ha?—gets his sax (6) poon’ (pound) the week. Uf he gi’ed muir coal nor thot, he’d ha’ his rate coot. Nae mon do muir nor thot, awnd most do only the meenemum of seventeen shillin’ the day.”

Earl Haig’s continued appeals for jobs for the 200,000 soldiers still jobless makes the prospect of finding work without pull pretty punk, and now it looks equally hopeless with pull.

Well, anyway, I haven’t altogether lost time in trying to learn if “there’s a reason” why the Clyde-bank shipbuilders and dock workers have the reputation in London, at least, of being the most restless and radical of all British workmen. It is apparently impossible for any one to be here many hours without running into one complicating factor—namely whiskey.

After getting here late Thursday night I sallied forth last evening to see if the town was as bad for drunkenness as current reports would make it. With my first step onto the street I saw two drunken men reeling along through the crowd—it was very near the centre of the city—with two more encountered in my first fifty yards. Ten feet farther there was a crowd watching—with evident enjoyment!—a poor creature of a sottish, middle-aged woman, picking herself up from the sidewalk and with unctuous care dusting off her filthy and bedraggled skirts. Finally, with a

labored assumption of the magnificent dignity and extreme hauteur of a much-maligned but still unsullied perfect lady, she lurched in the direction of a drunken man who happened to be passing, and when he unexpectedly stopped to show her his good-will, she bumped full into him, and then caromed off of him across the street and up an alley out of sight.

Four more—and then four more—drunken laborers were encountered in the next two or three short blocks on the way up to a big group collected in the middle of the street. There the speaker was proposing seriously that “while our British army is in Poland killing our brother Bolsheviks, we will rise—and then call the soldiers back to a London and a Glasgow Soviet!” A good proportion of his hearers appeared delighted, and yelled “Hear! hear!” with gusto.

In a very modern and handsome movie theatre Pussyfoot Johnson was caricatured in a play which showed him and all his colleagues dead drunk at the uproarious end of their highly hectic crusadings. By that time it was nine, and the pubs were closing. A crowd was watching—with the eyes of connoisseurs—a poor chap in the cap and suit of a steamship’s engineer, slowly pick himself up from the sidewalk and lean against the building, blood running from his nose. Two young girls of about seventeen evidently thought it a perfectly lovely joke. Across the street in an alleyway—by this time the police had come and ordered the engineer on by threat of arrest—the crowd was gathering for the enjoyment of a fight. The thin but wiry boy had the ragged clothes, dirty neck muffler, long, front hair and much-soiled shirt of the laborer; he was not too drunk to complain that his opponent had kicked him seriously and unfairly, but he was too drunk to take the advice of the pair of policemen to drop his quarrel. So they hustled him off.

One of the bystanders protested that “they would na do

thot uf he was no’ a workin’ mon, ye mind. Uf ’e ’ad money they would ’a’ ’elped ’im—noo they stand oop fer ’is tormentors—awnd they gets part o’ ’is fine!”

Here’s the tale of my interpreter:

“Me mother is a droonkard—thot’s w’y I’m ’ere. A perfect vixen she is, too, when she’s in liquor. Fifteen year ago me father left her—he’d met her, ye see, in a restaurant where she was a waitress. Mony chances ’e give ’er, too, I will say, but she couldn’t do better. Where ’e is noo, I don’t know. If it wasn’t for keepin’ an eye on ’er in the town ’ere, I think I’d try Canada. Or I could go back to the army—and do well, too, after six year of it; but I want to try civil life again—an’ take a look after ’er, too, y’ oonde-r-stawnd? No, I can’t live with ’er—she’s fair impossible. But ’ere at this Salvation Army ’ostel—‘model,’ they call it—you can get a fair bed for a shillin’. But there’s a ’alf-dozen in the same room, d ’ye see, an’ no place to change or ’ave any baggage. I ’ope to get a decent job to-morrow—with good luck. . . . There’s too many people ’ere. Thot’s the trouble. Why, before the war you could rent ony ’ouse you wanted—and now—nothing. It must be thot they imported a lot of cheap labor—Eyetalians and all them yellow and black races, ye mind?—to do the work w’ile we was fightin’ and now they’re oonwillin’ to give us back our jobs. I’m fair sick of it—these people in here, in the ‘model,’ they ’ave no refinement w’atever—it’s nothin’ but booze an’ filth with ’em all the time. No ambition they got to be onybody, and they throw their children out on the streets. Oh, I’m fed up on it, I can tell ye. Somebody’s makin’ too much off us workers. They say exchange is bad. Now why should we bother about dollars and francs and a’ thot—an’ everybody—every nation—joost mind its own business! Why should we let exchange bother us—thot’s w’at I want to know! One eighth o’ the people works and the rest is parasites! Out o’ fifty

people 'ere on the streets, I give ye my word, forty-nine of 'em's crooks an' leeches an' prostitutes! That's 'onest—forty-nine of 'em! Awnd uf ye get into one o' these crowds on Bath Street, a-watchin' the performers or a-'earin' the arguments, pick-pockets will be dippin' in yer pockets sure. . . . Wull, take a look to-morrow in the *Citizen*. Ye're sure to find some skilled jobs there—thot's the trouble. All skilled and no general labor wanted. Good night awnd good luck awnd a good job to ye!"

Though it was getting late the crowds were still watching some boy acrobats on Bath Street and Bolshevism was being argued back and forth in groups where men massed around the disputants, pushing their best ears in as far as possible.

"Propaganda—thot's it. They take the American offer for the ten thousand ton of rails here on oor streets, not to save thot thirty thousand poon' (pounds) but to scare oos workers into bein' more tractive like. Why couldn't they pay ten thousand poon' more uf 'twould pay oos workers—oos workers thot won the war!"

"More regularity in work it is as does it in America. It must be, for if they pay good wages, then they must plan to make as much profits in a year as here. Ah, they're cunning, these capitalists! Only they don't discharge 10,000 men over there on a moment's notice like they do here."

"Why was there only one bid from all the Scotch awnd English companies oonless 'twas propoganda?" asks the other.

"Ah, but they'll all bid here for steel as soon as ever they have everything set—just as the Americans won't sell you certain things, like watches—I'm a watchmaker and I know—until they're ready. There's some reason—and besides, capitalists are bound together all over the world! Profit knows no patriotism, you know."



“But did na Germany in the heich o’ the warr show thot communism canna be beaten? By linkin’ its labor and its nateral resoorces all together for the state it stood off the world!”

And so on, without end, and without any apparent arrival anywhere. The chief trouble was that in time nearly every argument was entered into by the same drunken fellow who wanted to be taken very seriously but did little more than repeat—without any attention to his answerers—the same question with a drunken leer of cunning, as though he had cornered everybody. That done, he would perhaps denounce all the world’s supply of capitalists in language of most frightful blasphemy and obscenity. At all times, the breaths of the whole crowd were terrible to suffer for the sake of one’s ears.

All of which seems to be an ordinary evening in Glasgow.

I wonder if it’s a cause or an effect—or only a symptom—of Glasgownian unrest.

Glasgow  
Sunday night,  
August 8, 1920.

“That’s where Glasgow blows off steam.”

A table companion has just now given that description of “Glasgow Green,” where I’ve been listening to more Radicalism this afternoon than I heard in my whole seven months of job-searching in America.

The meeting advertised was to promote the policy of the big national unions of Great Britain to “down tools” rather than fight with Russia or give the various wars on the Continent any help whatever. When I finally got my ear into the first big crowd, it was a great surprise to hear the speaker calling the Archbishop of Canterbury a liar because he had said something unfriendly to betting on races. It gradually became evident that the speaker was trying to sell a racing sheet which he guaranteed infallible



in helping its readers to pick the winning horse. After listening for some time to the next centre of a big crowd—after laboriously screwing myself into ear's length—the same discovery resulted. The third crowd was smaller; the speaker was making, within about twenty feet of distance, the great jump from racing to religion! Finally I got into the huge crowd farther in by the Nelson Monument—to learn from several speakers that “Socialism is the country's only hope!” that “Russia is being fought by the Poles only because the desperate and frightened financial and capitalistic powers realize themselves in a death-grip with their mortal foe”; that “Bolshevism and Capitalism cannot live on the same globe” because “Bolshevism makes a demonstration of the power of the working men to get everything they want the moment they will practise the solidarity the war showed them to possess. This is the great crisis. Unity now will save the world from bloodshed—and help us to put into operation in all our chief cities the humane and efficient régime of the Soviets.” (Much applause and a multitudinous “Hear! hear!”)

When they were all shouted out, the resolution as framed in London by the chief union heads was put—and from all appearances carried unanimously—incidentally, also, to the waving of the flag of the Irish Republic!

The highly respectable appearance and the oratorical ability of these speakers were quite surprising, as also of those who followed in the vehement urging of the Anti-Rent Increase Strike proposed for August 23—to last only one day and to be followed by the withholding of any rent whatever until the landlord or his agent (called the factor) agrees not to take advantage of the government's permission to increase his charges thirty-five or forty per cent over pre-war figures.

The other outstanding feature of all the talks was the continuous appeal to the “working class.” In that, how-

ever, they are only following, so far as I can see, the lead of all the rest of the country. In newspapers that speak of the Report of the Cost of Wool something is sure to be said about "yarns used in clothes made for the working class." Editorials seem to juggle the "working classes" with "middle classes" and "upper classes" continuously. Railways cause an awful howl when they say they want to stop asking the middle classes to make up the deficit caused by enormous reductions given to the users of "working class" tickets. (Just now they're raising their price and calling them "Early Hour" trains!)

"Workin' clawss we are," my weary landlady there at the mines would say in explanation of her home's simplicity every time I set about for my "bathin' " in the kitchen. Everywhere, up and down and across and at all times, the current explanation, alibi, or appeal appears to be made in terms of class interests and differences. Certainly nothing could be put in more bitter words than the constant exhortation that the working class revenge itself upon the "capitalistic class" as the planner and author of every evil perpetrated or imagined.

"The Kaiser whom we licked buys himself a castle. And you and I of the working classes that licked him, and put our bodies between him and Britain's homes—we have not where to lay our heads!"

Of course, the Anti-Rent Increase Strike carried, with every hand in the air.

"The widdies and orphans of the workers that fought in Flanders, how cawn they pay more rent the noo?" a young engineer asked me after he had said he was getting six pounds the week after twenty years of work with a very fair employer. "It's our government thot's betrayin' oos. It's lies and perjury they make of the fair promises they gi'n oos at the elections."

He had no answer when asked why he felt so sure that

the people's elected representatives under Bolshevik or any other auspices would be any more reliable.

"France should gang her ain gait—and we oors. Then Germany could walk in and do for them Frenchies," a group of four or five apparently skilled mechanics were saying at one side—with amazingly calm cold-bloodedness.

The sellers of every kind of Socialist, Bolshevik, sporting, and sensational paper were doing an enormous business as the crowd broke up—after following a group of Sinn Feiners about in the hope of some excitement.

This evening—and this afternoon—I have been saying to myself: "Gaze on this picture, then on that," as I have recalled from last night what constituted, without doubt, the most depressing portrayal of humanity it has ever been my lot to see.

Passing the numerous drunken men in the centre of the city and going into what is called the Cowcaddens district just before closing time at nine, I found the pubs crowded with women as well as men, most of them drinking large glasses of whiskey followed by beer.

"She's a workin' woman, ye mind. Too bawd thot awld she is," answered a fat, blear-eyed woman who was crying drunkenly with her arm around a rather sweet-faced old lady whose combination of toothlessness and whiskey made her words about her daily job of scrubbing impossible to understand. One young woman with a very sweet face was with her husband, enjoying a final whiskey-beer as the bell commenced to ring for closing, while everybody surged up for the final order and the bartender and barmaids shouted and banged: "Time, gents, time! Pass along now!"

Outside there seemed hardly a sober person of either sex on the crowded streets. Men and women lurched into the road and sang and swore and fell—while children seemed to take it all as a matter of course. Certainly they grow up

in it, judging from the women stumbling their drunken way home with their babies in the nursing shawls, which here, as in South Wales, seem to be the all but universal badge of femininity from childhood up. To a father, at least, it is heartrending to see the dreadful number of wretched children with sadly bent or knock-kneed legs—caused, they say, by rickets, the “poverty disease.”

In the next block the wife and friends were able to pull a drunken young man away in time to prevent the threatened fight, but a little farther on two drunken fellows—one of them covered with blood and weeping copiously in the arms of his friend who had got a hard pummelling himself by both contestants in his rôle of attempted peacemaker—had to be separated by the police and sent along home in the arms of their less-drunken neighbors.

By that time everybody was running down the street. For our exertions we were rewarded by seeing a man leaning out of the fourth-story window of the line of tenements, blowing vigorously on a police whistle. While the crowd grew dense, a policeman calmly waited until he was joined by two others—as though he knew altogether too much to go up alone. Shortly they came down, holding up between them the man, heavily bandaged about the head. “ ’Twas his wife thot stabbed him,” people whispered eagerly one to the other as the ambulance honked and clanged its way through the jam.

A little farther down I thought to give a kindly word to one of the filthiest hags I have ever seen, in the hope of learning how she accounted for herself and what particular idea or illusion happened to furnish her with the necessary modicum of self-respect. When face to face, it was amazing to note that in spite of her rags of filthy sacking under the greasy and disreputable shawl held about her by twine, and underneath the coarse black beard which marked the lines of her chin and jaw, she had really a strong face. She



looked at me keenly and with some fair degree of sobriety, though her breath bespoke whiskey.

"It's a gentleman of intelligence and education that's speakin'," she said. She was evidently not looking for sympathy in the way I had assumed. The reason became evident—to my utter amazement—when she answered my question as to how she got along in the world. In words of dreadful obscenity, but in a manner much as a shipwright would assert his position above a casual dock laborer, she made clear her active standing, not as a common beggar, but as a daughter of Ishmael, the proud possessor of a trade, a self-supporting member of the demi-monde!

It required the utmost of self-control to stifle my gasp of horror.

When I passed on to talk with a drunken Irishman who proudly showed me his wound "from Wipers and with the Black Watch, sir!" she suddenly broke out with: "Ye're a spy! That's what ye are!" She was talking with others excitedly as I waved good-by to her and the soldier and strolled on to the nearest brawl. When it came to going up some of the alleys filled with loud-talking, or yelling, and very intoxicated groups of men and women, it seemed wise to turn up my coat collar, pull down my cap, and then to stagger—in order not to attract undue attention.

Without exaggeration, the majority of people in the district appeared intoxicated, women as well as men. The dreadful language a man and woman were yelling at each other from different floors in one of the horrid tenements is ringing in my ears yet—along with some of the other frightful profanity of the streets. And in all places and at all hours, young girls laughing hilariously at the drunken wrecks of either sex, while under the feet of the crowd of every fight and every argument, run and squirm—and look and listen—the bareheaded, barefooted, bow-legged, or knock-kneed little children—till a chap some thousands of





CHILDREN IN A CROWDED GLASGOW DISTRICT.

The little mother in the centre with the "nursing shawl" and the baby could not keep from being surrounded by her friends. The number of Glasgow's children having the bent legs or otherwise deformed by rickets, the "poverty disease," is enough to make a lonesome father sick at heart.



A SALOON OR "PUB" IN LONDON'S EAST END AS A "NEIGHBORHOOD CENTRE" TO WHICH THE BABE IN ARMS IS BECOMING ACCUSTOMED EARLY.



lonely miles away from his own youngsters has hard work to keep back his tears.

In a near-by open square knots of men, as though on Bath Street, were arguing politics and economics.

"They be no arguments—'tis naught but whiskey," said a policeman. "To-morrow with the pubs closed, 'twill be quiet enough."

In my entire evening only one worker had said a sober word to me. He looked like a careful man of some skill and thrift:

"Yes, I'm Irish, but I'd not like to work alongside one from there just now. In Belfast lately, in the shipyards, a friend was telling me, a new worker—from the South, he was—had on him a revolver with fifteen rounds o' ammynition. Of course, they refused to work with 'im. . . . Yes, they're aye takin' on new min here, but ye must join a union to stay."

At Bath Street, near midnight, the groups were just as hectic as before except that the drunken interruptions were much more frequent than earlier in the evening.

" . . . great argument  
About it and about, but evermore came out  
By that same door wherein I went."

When I look on that picture and then on the revolutionary festival of this afternoon, I keep wondering whether there is any connection between them and if so what it is—cause, effect, symptom, or what. Of this, at least, I am sure—Glasgow is certainly the most revolutionary and also the most rum-ridden and degraded city I ever yet have seen.

Glasgow  
Tuesday, August 10, 1920.

The talk to-day—in my regular character—with the shop steward and some workers from the biggest steel plant was

quite worth while. Here are some conclusions. How much they're worth, I've no idea, but they are agreed to by the labor manager's assistant who used himself to be a union leader:

"The Clyde district is not actually as bad as it's painted. Neither are the big labor leaders; they exaggerate just as do the engineers when they ask eightpence an hour raise and know that all they hope to get is fourpence.

"It's a *job* that everybody wants—a *regular*, steady job. When some of our ship ways were covered in so the men could work in all weather, trouble with them decreased by two-thirds. The various unions fight each other as bitterly as they do the employers—all for jobs. When work was scarce here after the armistice, engineers got to taking laborers' jobs—until the engineers' union was forced to stop it—or become the enemy of all the others.

"One of our supers here said lately: 'No, that's why I've not promoted him. It's harder to find a good worker now than a passable foreman!' Yes, sir, that's what he said! Of course, that discourages every worker—closes the door to promotion in his face, ye see.

"Health insurance? Why, it's a tragedy! a popular doctor is chosen by thousands—too many for him to give them proper attention. He just gives them a look and writes out a fool prescription.

"All our whiskey troubles come from Sunday closing—men prepare for Sunday too well—and on bad whiskey, mainly imported from America! Prohibition? No fear! Why, liquor is the government's best milch-cow—gets nearly one million pounds from it—sixty-eight out of every seventy-nine shillings spent at the bar. Yes, sir, without rum we'd certainly have revolution!

"During the war the pacifists here believed Germany would win. 'We better make the best terms possible with Jerry,' they said. So they struck—in spite of national union leaders that came to help the government to get them

to work. Nine of the local agitators were sent away from here—probably a mistake. Now—with the H. C. L. as the chief irritant—one group is for collective bargaining on old union lines, while the younger—and, yes, the more numerous—ones are for constant irritation between men and masters as the definite means to social revolution. That’s why the engineers near Sheffield are striking because a new foreman is not a member of their union. They know there’s no sense to that but it helps make trouble. The masters do well to fight it.”

One of the men—he is a union head and also a member of the city council in a large British steel town—is a very thoughtful, conservative chap. The other, from the local plant, is not very live or intelligent. A third, from the labor exchange, is a typical low-browed politician.

To-night I hurried down to meet the two who called from the plant workers’ committee for a further talk—to find that they had gone because one of them, according to the porter, was intoxicated!

Yesterday the manager of the street railways—owned and operated by the city—said that most of the steel rails on Glasgow’s streets had been rolled at Lorain, Ohio! Also that he had asked twenty-five or thirty companies here and everywhere in England to bid for the recent ten-thousand-ton order and that only one British company had replied. It quoted a price of twenty-eight pounds with the provision that this would go up if the price of steel in England generally was raised. An American company had offered a settled price of twenty-four pounds ten. Both his subcommittees of the council had agreed and the order had been given, and the rails are now being rolled at Lorain. Later a labor representative in the council made an objection alleging bad pay and bad conditions in the American steel plants, referring particularly to the twelve-hour day, so now the council is withholding its O. K.

Although he does not seem to be worried about the out-



come and only wants the rails quickly, nevertheless it makes a very good example of the way this matter of labor relations and conditions may enter into the whole affair of international business, for he did delay the order to the point of getting a disclaimer from the American agent at London, who, by the way, seems to have admitted that he knew almost nothing about hours, wages, and other working conditions in the American plants. Naturally the manager was very glad to be saving something like \$120,000 on the order.

"All the British steel works are too busy to promise delivery," a local steel man replied when asked the why of the solitary—and high—bid.

With a chance friend from India I met on the train, it was interesting a few days ago to run onto the same old idea about the importance of the job in all stations. When we got well acquainted, he confided:

"None of my family can understand why, with means enough to live on here or anywhere, I see no pleasure in life except doing such a piece of work as out there in northern India where I am superintending, just now, the opening up of some big hydroelectric enterprises for the government. They've been kind enough to give me four decorations for that and other things. Earlier in my training I worked two years in a Sheffield coal-mine, lying for the whole of the nine-hour day on my side in a two-foot seam. I guess I'm more of a socialist than an aristocrat. . . . Anyway, I'm very fond of the Indian people. Our trouble there has been that our job has been too well done. The civil-service exams to go out there have put England's finest men into the work. They have labored splendidly and borne all the burdens—so much so that the Indians have gotten no idea of the difficulties involved and so have criticised us freely. The new plan now will let them in for their share of the job. Then when they criticise the government they will also be

criticising their own blood brothers—besides finding the job harder than it looks.”

That seems to me quite worth noticing in the case of industry. The average worker has no idea at all—especially here in England—of any problems connected with the management. To him the “mawsters” appear mere loafers—lucky loafers. That’s not strange at all, seeing that the managers have usually been just about as chary with their information as the ordinary foreman who feels that it is his “know-how” which gives him his job and therefore constitutes his capital. Without knowing anything about the difficulties of management the average worker has little enough desire to get into them; he is likely to have even less after he gets closer to them. He is, at any rate, sure to see that they mean worry as well as work. Most of all he is sure to be impressed with the surprising extent to which these problems are shot through with risk—the risk which usually goes with the direction of capital. These gains would certainly appear to make some form of representative dealing desirable in the average factory.

Hope to get away to-morrow to a cheap hotel or boarding-house where I can put on my old clothes as a more regular diet and, in a sense o’ speakin’, roll up my sleeves for the finding of that elusive job.

Glasgow  
Thursday night  
August 12.

It’s queer how the last two days—since leaving good clothes—make it all feel like an entirely different town. Psychologically, surely, it is a very different one.

Inside a great plant in a crowded, dirty factory district, the roar of the dripping furnaces and the clankety-rumble of the rolls made it seem more like home. The first chap I ran into proved to be a “dummy.” He pointed to his ears and then showed me his piece of chalk in his teeth, but,

because of our common experiences, we had a long conversation about piece rates and time rates, etc., without needing anything more than signs. We pointed to our pockets for pay, to our watches for time, and went through a weighing motion with our hands for indicating tonnage. I understood him perfectly and had a lot of sympathy for him when I saw by the prodigious face he made that he was most unhappy to be himself on "time" when all the others rolling the great ship plates were on tonnage. Often enough I have felt the same way myself! After he had made other similar remarks in the way of wiping imaginary sweat from his forehead for "registering" hard work and weariness, he did not seem to feel that I was properly appreciating the bad faces he was making. So he cleaned off a piece of sheet steel lying on the floor and, with a hesitating scrawl, expressed himself by means of his chalk. From his face I could have guessed it; for, next to "Full up!" it seems to be the most common expression over here—in fact, I'm sure it has a very great deal to do with the whole industrial situation following the war—in America as well as here: "F-e-d u-p!" he scribbled, with a fiendishly sour face!

All the world seems fed up. It is probably because after the hard strain of the war we all thought it would be possible to get back to normal life again and have a nice long rest. And just then the H. C. L. hit us with the unexpected load of additional hustle required in order to keep up and maintain our regular pre-war condition. The trouble is that this load came when the slightest weight fell upon exhausted nerves. It came at a time when, with our strength gone, the "grasshopper became a burden." "Fed up"—you hear it here at all times. It is not so much that the wear and tear is so heavy as that our margin of resistance is so thin and light.

"It's all hand work here," said another worker as we

watched the men wheeling the big pieces of hot metal from the furnaces to the rolls or to the big hammer. I have a hole in my cap from one of the sparks that travelled forty feet. "Over at Beardmore's they have three times the machinery and get more than that amount of tonnage and pay—with less sweat."

In this same district a young boy, who had chosen the public-house bar as his life job, said that during the week people drank mostly beer, but on Saturday nights it was nearly all whiskies or whiskies with beer.

"And 'on Friday afternoons—when the men get paid off and we have to serve them mainly whiskies before we close at two-thirty—then 'tis very hard to give them their wants and at the same time their proper change for the five poon' notes they all pays wi'."

"Ye'll have to go to the docks or the shipyards yersel'! We cawnt' help ye," the man at the Labor Exchange told me after I had given my story about my need of work. "'Tis not like America, where ye can be given any job if ye can 'andle ut. Hev ye got any papers? . . . Wull, there ye are! Try the gates, if ye like."

But everywhere it has been a tale of men being laid off or going for weeks with little or no work, especially on the docks.

"Lots o' them here," said a man who checks barrel-staves brought in from Canada for factories here, "never get more than a half week's work at most. But still they do na like work too regular. Awnd this way, too, they are very independent; if a gaffer is too braw or uses bad language, they leave him and go to another boat or dock—or report him to the union and he gets a letter! . . . Whuskee and bad livin' conditions? Wull, there are mony here who live in these models and lose all respect for themselves; awnd they pay no taxes tho they have to go to the poor-house later and be supported by us other taxpayers. But whuskee



—wull, I tell 'oo, this American whuskee is fair poison. Not till I went to Canada did I ever have a head after whuskee. Thot it is thot makes so mony drunken ones here!"

So America is to blame for last Saturday night!

A couple of young electricians at the table where we had a very dirty but cheap meal served by the dockers' union were very happy in the long hours they got every so often—at "time-and-a-half," of course. As usual, they wanted to know the scale of wages and the price of board, clothes, laundry, movies, etc., in the States.

"The best job around here is gettin' a 'jump' on one o' the boats. Six months oot and ye coom back wi' eighty poon' or so."

When, a few hours later, I asked about getting a "jump" or vacancy on the liner getting ready to go to New York the fourth or fifth assistant engineer exploded:

"No bloody chawnce! First ye moost have your union carrd. An' if there was one mon missin' when we cast off, there'd be enough others hereaboots to carry the ship over on their bloody shoulders! There's jobs, yes, but too mony people for 'em!"

After puzzling why this kind of opening for a livelihood should be called a "jump," a question brought an answer which makes it plain enough that it couldn't possibly be called anything else!

"If ye sign oop for the ship's crew, the place ye signed for is held for ye oop to the minute the ropes is cawst off. Then they calls oot, 'Two firemen!' or 'One deck-hand!' or perhaps, 'An oiler!' Wi' thot, ye joomps over onto the deck awnd if ye're the first to get there, the job's yours. But if 'twas ye thot signed oop and ye coom down after the 'jumps' is taken, w'y, then ye're arrested for a deserter. Thot's the law."

One glance down into the hold of a big freighter from



Canada showed that the men there were time-workers; they were sitting down lazily in the thousands of bushels of wheat or standing in them to their knees and languidly using big wooden shovels to push the grain down to where the endless chain of scoops caught it up and carried it out to a huge pile on the dock. With the air thick with flying chaff, the men, with their pants legs tied tight around their ankles by string to keep the wheat out of their shoes, and their mufflers tucked close around their necks, looked like the unhappy victims of some queer kind of snow-storm.

A glance showed with equal plainness that another group were working for pay by results. A more ambitious gang I’ve seldom seen. It was a sight to behold the way they shovelled the wheat into a small barrel, hoisted it onto the scales, emptied it and later another into a sack, and then lifted the sack onto the shoulders of a strong man who deftly dumped the two hundred pounds or so onto a waiting wagon. Everybody envied them for getting about two pounds ten apiece for every day they were able to get hold of such a job.

It made such a good picture of combined skill, speed, sweat, sleight, and muscle—the day was so far gone that all chance of a job was gone—that I had to pull my camera from under my vest. Before I got away I had to promise to send them each a copy! It looks as though we all like to see ourselves in our working togs even more than when we’re loafing, even though we’re all diked out. (Unfortunately the picture was not a success.)

Most of the dock laborers seem to take turns with their trucks in getting under the loads of pipe or lumber or flour that the hydraulic cranes swing up to them from the ship’s hatches—with ordinarily a fairly good spell of loafing between the turns. Why the contractor hires so many I don’t know. Half of them would be enough. Two in the gang this afternoon were very drunk.

A labor member of the city council says this morning in the paper that in America he found the worker getting about fifty per cent better wages than here, housing immensely better, no labor politics—and whiskey everywhere as easy to get as coffee!

"Absolutely no American whiskey supplied here," a pub near the dock advertises!

On almost any corner at any time a man runs out an Anti-Rent Increase Strike meeting. Over fifty thousand strike posters are said to have been distributed for hanging in windows, with another sixty thousand now on the presses. "Don't Pay Your Rent!" they urge.

"Glasgow had ten thousand houses condemned as unfit habitation before the war. They're all being lived in to-day. Houses that would have cost then 250 pounds will now cost 1,000 pounds. The interest alone will therefore make them rent at 60. The working class is 80 per cent of all, but they get only 43 per cent of the income of the country. They can be more powerful than the government when they make up their minds to stick together. So I beg of you all to go together on strike on Monday, the 23rd!"

And now to open up the window of my attic and try to get from my pillow a good pair of eyes and ears for tomorrow.

Glasgow  
Sunday  
August 15th.

Most of the educated people here seem to think that Glasgow does not deserve its reputation for extreme radicalism, but the last few days spent at the gates of the Clyde bank shipyards and the docks certainly show that a very large number of workers are very sore at things in general and at the "capitalist class" in particular—very particular.

A respectable-looking engineer of the better type there

at the noon-hour loaf at one of the largest yards—ten thousand and more employees—gave me a shock day before yesterday.

“No trouble here—except that we should ha’ awsked fer a shillin’ an’ our more instead o’ a tuppence. And besides all strikes are wrong—yes, this rent strike, too!” That looked as though there was at least one conservative! “What they should do,” he went on, “is to stick a dagger into the bellies of the bloody ——s that made the law with a note tellin’ why! . . . No, thot would na be wrong, nae mair wrong than shootin’ a burglar. . . . Yes, and we build the ships here better thon in England—never do oor rivets loosen—and if Spain had only had the war-ships we’ve built here in this yard alone, it could ha’ wiped oop America—thot mony there been! . . . Yes, Jimmy Douglas, the foreman, he’s your mon—ye’ll find ’im over there when the whistle blows. A guid mon he is, too.”

“Jimmy” and others of his kind were very considerate when I asked for a reamer’s job—driller’s, they call it here—at several yards along the river Friday and down at Greenoch yesterday—twenty miles down.

“Materials is short—and they’ve laid off six hundred oop at So and So’s. But ’tis mainly propaganda—tryin’ to break doon oor wages,” is the word generally given by the men when you talk with them at the noon-hour as they stroll up to hear the Irish-Scotchman who barks out like a wild dog to a few hundred of them that “Scottish troops are in readiness to murder the Irish race,” and “The next great war will be with America.” “Scottish workers must start a general strike now and prevent a civil war and a world war.”

Perhaps it is because at home men have become over-fearful of using strong language, while here they let them blow off steam at any and all places—at any rate, the whole effect is certainly to make it seem like a highly unrestful

place, especially seeing all the elaborate plans that are going forward for a big demonstration against the landlords on the 23rd. From most of the workers I have seen have come amazingly bitter words about the law, considering that the landlords were not allowed to raise rents during the war. There are fewer workers at the factory gates than at home, but the line is usually a fairly long one filing up to the counter in the Labor Exchanges to be certified as out of work for the day. Several times I have waited long in the biggest line, or "queue," supposing that it was, of course, jobs they were after—to find later that for a job I had to go over to the solitary clerk in the corner with the small group around him! Likely enough he would not know without consulting a book somewhere, such a fact as the current rate for "general labor" or "drillers," etc. Of the big plants only the one first mentioned seems to have any arrangements for hiring other than giving a chance to see the foreman of the particular department. This is itself a difficult job; he is ordinarily seeable only at certain definite moments before and after the shift goes on—and those moments are the same at practically all plants. The result is, as it is in America, a man can make only one guess for a morning or afternoon. That does not seem to work as much hardship for the worker here as in America, mainly because fewer men are fired or leave, and so fewer are to be hired.

With some of the timekeepers and other minor officials it has been possible to edge into a conversation appropriate to the tongue and ears of a man who "was gettin' along all right in the States and thought I'd have a bit of a holiday and work my passage over and am runnin' short of money, d' ye see?"

"Yes, the piece-workers give a fair day, but the time men, like those laborers there or those painters, well, they just loaf. They don't deserve the name of *workmen* at all.



To pass the time somehow they just idle and argue by the hour. And the way they can tell by intuition when a gaffer’s about! They fair smell him! And when he comes around they’re so busy that he thanks God that there’s such noble workers in the British Isles! Yes, they and their unions are goin’ too far!”

From the newspapers it seems that everybody—except the local workers—is aghast at the Council of Action which the national union heads have put up for enforcing labor’s will upon Parliament—indeed, for supplanting Parliament. “Down tools, every worker, before any war with Russia!” The workers whom I see seem to think it all the right idea exactly, though it must be said that many of them don’t understand it—except that it’s against the government—that is, the particular ruling party which they hate. Most of the reading of newspapers, by the way, appears to be confined to the sheets which give, every noon, the advice for picking the winners in the afternoon races—those and the cheap novels buyable in almost every business block.

“Most o’ those chaps do nae work but soomhoow they ha’ a shillin’ or a saxpence for the bookies every Saturday awfternoon, onyhoow,” a laborer explained on the benches in the main square of Paisley, after I had taken a look at the two huge and famous thread mills there. All the idlers were busy with their newspapers—and then with scrawling out the name of their choice! “Hoow it cooms thot materials be slack wi’ stuff a-cooming frae America I do-unt know—though I do know thot some o’ these gaffers would coot yer throat fer a hapenny. . . . Awnd ye hae nae trade? . . . Wull, now, thot’s bawd. I hae doot o’ yer findin’ worrk.”

The “definite threat and challenge to the Constitution,” such as the Council of Action is called—besides its other names of the “Council of Distraction” and the “London Soviet”—is not likely to sit very heavily on the minds of such



workers. The craftsmen of a better sort are not so easy to come into contact with; they are the ones, I presume, whose level-headedness is counted upon, as usual, to save the country from the extremists. But at least it would look as though these last are very numerous. Also that the group of those who are too far down the ladder of decency and self-respect to care what happens and who, therefore, constitute a sort of balance of power—evil power—in a crisis, is beyond all peradventure amazingly large here. Whether it is mainly Irish, as some say, I can't tell. This crowd it is that comes into its own on Friday afternoons and Saturday nights.

Last night a policeman in Cowcaddens exploded with his "There's a doozen districts—and more—joost as bawd!" when asked if I had already seen the worst on my adventures of a week ago. He certainly was right—at least to the extent of the four or five different districts I proceeded to visit in line with his directions.

It's not worth while trying to describe the various scenes, other than to say that the whole city, more or less, seemed to be trying to go Cowcaddens one better. Everywhere—even in the very centre of the city—it was a mass of staggering, singing, swearing, laughing men and women and boys and girls interspersed with men with puff-adder necks—playing bagpipes or flutes or kneading accordians for the coppers of the passers-by, or standing in the middle of the road singing with all their drunken might and bloated pride. As you walk—especially in the less-lighted sections—it is necessary to watch carefully to keep from stepping into the vomitings of the earlier home goers! On the car you pass this man or woman reeling along or see this man making overpolite bows while the young lady edges away—or laughs at him mockingly—while other bolder and more fortunate Don Juans wrestle with their sweethearts in what looks like a cross between caressing and boxing. When the man in the seat behind you leans forward and puts his head

onto your back, you think of the slippery sidewalks and of the scarcity of your coats—and change your seat hurriedly! Whereupon you attract the attention of a well-dressed and keen-faced “artisan” who draws himself up in the inebriated certainty of his splendid—though befuddled—mentality, and his expressive, though unruly, tongue, and asks you with great solemnity:

“W’y do we ’awve a bloody parasite like the King? A bleedin’ loafer ’e is! ’Tis the capitalists thot own us workin’ clawss like slaves—but they do nae feed oos. The ——!!” . . . [Here the young ladies are forced to go out.] “But, God lumme, ’twas Bobbie Burns thot hae soong, ‘A mon’s a mon for a’ thot!’ ”

“When my turn cooms fer Saturday night ’tis fed up I get wi’ all this,” says the serious and hard-working—and fairly pretty—girl conductor who has held onto her job since war days.

When you get home and go up to your attic you hear cries, shouts, and screams coming from a near-by slum—for I’m living in Cowcaddens—and as you go to sleep you wonder whether the sharp staccato of the clanging bell means the arrival of the ambulance or the undertaker’s wagon!

All that makes it disheartening to go to the Green this afternoon and find that the big crowd you hoped was the advertised prohibition or no-license meeting proves to be the usual Hibernian protest! Later, the few who do come to the meeting of the Prohibitionists hear some very different speeches. Everywhere it is said that the churches take little interest in local option, partly because many priests and pastors have taken the recommendations of the publicans—brewers and distillers—in their congregations to get large incomes on their brewery or distillery investments. It appears pretty certain—in line with the claims of the speakers—that many pastors and others are unwilling to

risk offending their influential friends by signing the petition for a vote. All sorts of educated people here—and also in Wales—seem to believe that the government gets too much revenue out of “the trade,” to be able to run without it—and everybody, apparently, has the idea that alcohol is a food. “Drink two quarts of good beer every day for a year and besides maintaining your health you contribute twenty-five pounds to your government”—not to mention another thirty to the brewers in a country that strikes against the raising of rents, most of which are much less than twenty or twenty-five pounds a year.

Am hoping for an early chance at a few foremen to-morrow and, with good luck, a pneumatic drill in my hand and a lot of Scotch burrs on interesting subjects in my ears!

Glasgow,  
Tuesday, August 17th.

Last night at 10.45 in the big dockyard the prospect was good for a job rustling freight. According to my docker pals of the day, it was easy for even an “unbadged” or non-union man to find work on the night shift when boats happened to be working, as they would be. “Joost be there before the shift goes on at eleven!” But my heart soon sank as I saw a score and more of quiet figures leaning against the gaffer’s shanty in the shadows. When a long half-hour dragged by in silence—men never seem to talk much when this question of job or no job is in suspense—and a number had come up jobless from the other boat, the only proper thing seemed to be to give it up, though a few did stick around against hope.

“Ye cawn never tell *that*, Jock!” one of the silent shadows said in surprise when I asked what chance there would be.

“It’s mebbe a fortnight and nae work fer an oor and then long oors and extra pay fer a fortnight,” several others had said that morning, some in anger and others not. It is

said that the union has so far refused to enter into a proposed arrangement whereby all the docks would get workers through a central clearing station each day as the ships arrived. At this central station all the workers would wait until 'phoned for. The reason for the opposition is that the worker at the metal dock does not want to take the chance of being called to work at a wheat dock, for instance, and then perhaps miss his chance at a metal cargo when it comes in shortly after. He is sure of his ability to earn high with his skill in handling metal but is not certain how much he can earn with other cargoes. Now, however, that the dockers are to come under the unemployment insurance, something of the sort will, without doubt, have to be worked out.

"It's awl accordin' to the 'orses," was the surprising answer from one of the men in a gang working like mad—on piece rates, of course—weighing the wheat, sliding it down the chutes onto wagons which took it out to the tracks and then carrying it on their shoulders with quick steps from the wagons up steep planks onto the railway cars or "trucks." Of course, when the indispensable horses and their wagons did not come in quick succession, the whole operation stopped and all the men lost their chance at their possible maximum of fifty shillings or more for the turn.

If paid in exact proportion to the energy they expend as compared with the regular—and exceedingly leisurely—sixteen-shillings-a-turn day workers these sweating hustlers should get even more!

"Ye cawn see the gaffer this noon," was all the satisfaction I could get at the entrance of a big shipyard yesterday morning early. As I loafed about, debating what to do, a number of boys came running down the street and dashed through the gate. It certainly looked as though they had been late for the whistle and were very anxious to get to their tools and hard at the job. But the guard had evi-



dently seen the trick before. To my amazement, he caught them by the collar, one by one, and pushed them out into the gang of us as impostors! They were only trying to break through to a gaffer in working hours in the hope of being "set on." At noon the gaffer held a sort of office into which we all went one by one—after we had hiked up our coats, put our hats on more firmly, straightened up our shoulders and, finally, with a full head of courage, walked boldly in to him to ask: "Wot about a chawnee, sir?" All in vain! He turned us all down with his: "Full up! Full up! Full up, I tell you!"

"Over in France 'twas, 'We'll take care o' ye'—and not a — job the noow! Look ut these girls here! Awfter oor jobs, they are! Uf they're widows, righto. Uf not—oot wi' um! Every one—every widow, ye oonderstand—should hae a band on her arm to show. Awnd these Sinn Feiners—why dinna they go hoom to help their coose? They coom here by boatloads, d' ye ken, when *we* was fight-in'—awnd when *they* refused conscription—awnd they hae oor jobs the noow! Awnd here they talk and talk. But go hoom foor their coose, they will na!" That was the kind of remark passed around when one by one we had come out from the little office loaded—and unhappy—with our individual portions of the universal "Full up!"

"This — government—'tis all ut's fault. Dynamite! I gi' ut to ye in a nutshell—we should blow oop the House o' Parlyment. . . . Av coorse they're afraid on us—that we woo-od massacre um! Awnd that we shoo-od!"

With an intelligent but long jobless and much worried young electrician—recently married—I went over to the docks to find "if mebbe, I can get back home on a ship." The engineer of the American boat we tackled has evidently suffered:

"No, not on your life! Every bunk's full—stokers and all. And anyway, I wouldn't take you unless the Consul



here could tell me all about you. I'm sick of this way you young American fellows are coming over here, getting drunk, disgracing your country and your flag, leaving your ship's officers in the lurch—and then coming like this to some other ship with a hard-luck story. You oughta be ashamed of yourself! Nothing doing!"

I slunk away in disgrace. It's easy to imagine that he's not happy about prohibition. It certainly is hard to keep our attitudes and opinions from being the reverse side of the current coin of our experience from day to day. As with him, so with a companion on the tram this afternoon who broke into the argument several of us started:

"Let me tell you why I nae cawn eat this frozen meat they try to bring frae America to make oor livin' less dear. When I was a lad I was a farm servant. We had none o' all this goovernment inspection thot makes all so costly. Oor mawster—a gentleman farmer he was—never had a sheep die o' ony disease but he coots its throat and sticks it into the brime (brine) foor oos servants. It made ye sick once—and then ye never ate it again—but bread and taties instead. So I'm afeard o' ony but fresh meat the noow."

When we came to the bridge a great crowd was at the railing watching some men in boats. They were dragging the bottom for the bodies of two suicides of the night before.

"There's George now!" a fine-looking young fellow said—he had earlier wanted me, if ever I should see him, to thank Captain St. John, an American physician, for saving his life by his new treatment for mustard-gas victims. "Why, George is the Humane Society man. His life job has been keeping the boats and grappling-irons for finding bodies at this place. 'Tis a great place for suicides. He's wonderful at finding them, too—almost by instinct! It often seems as though he could smell a body! Of course, he's been at it all his life. *You see his father had the same job before him,*"

Somehow it's hard to like—or "fawncy," as we Welsh would say—a town that keeps two generations busy on a job like that within a hundred yards of its main corner! But it's not surprising that George comes in to add himself to the other three chaps I've been rubbing shoulders with—rum, revolution, and the one and two room homes. It should be added, also, that there are over 500 cases of small-pox going around right in our midst—mostly in such districts as Cowcaddens!

"Isn't that a pretty dish to set before the King!"

I wonder what he thinks—or knows—about it, by the way.

A day or two more will about do.

Glasgow,

Thursday night, August 19th.

Well, it looks like things were getting a little plainer.

For one thing, the bailie, or town councillor, who has just returned from America, did my heart good by telling one of his fellow Socialist town councillors—I was calling on them both there at the city hall:

"Why, there's no doubt at all but they've got a standard of living over there in America not less than fifty per cent higher than our workers here—with wages not less than seventy-five per cent higher. And every decent worker with not less than four to six rooms in a detached house with a porch and all—and nice streets to walk down, with grass along the curb! Maybe shade trees in the middle arching over! And a motor-car sitting out in front or in the back yard! Why, my God, when I tell them about it here, my friends think I'm romancing! And here we are with 40,000 families in one-room apartments—that's 120,000 people! And 600,000 people in not more than two-room homes! And nobody in town with a porch—and our upper middle class less well off in all ways than their working

men, so far as I saw them. . . . Why, once we had a Socialist choir of girls here. They took the national prize one year. The next year they lost. 'Twas because they couldn't sing a song about a forest as well as some children could that came from the Highlands! Why, the poor things had never *seen* a forest! I suppose they thought maybe it was some kind of a 'close' (tenement stairway passage)."

His friend was pretty surely telling about one of the results of all this when as one of the heads of the Labor Party here he explained later:

"We Socialists think the Soviet is nothing but the natural result of the average individual citizen becoming more intelligent as the result of years of democracy—and so having to give less authority to the state or centralized government. In some modified form that's quite likely to follow from the work we do in selling as many as 5,000 copies of a new history of the Scottish labor movement, even before it is printed—all to our Socialist working-men customers—the men who live under these bad conditions. With such men who make up our constituency now we don't discuss Socialist principles any more; we just teach and train them in the technical side of the practical programme of Socialism for making these conditions fairer and better for the masses. Some of the converts we send into the unions to be leaders there, others into politics—all according to their talents after these have been carefully studied by us. Others we put into the co-operative movement. That movement sells now to as many as half of the families of Glasgow. It's all under the management of six men elected by the city's shoemakers, plumbers, steel workers, etc. We think we have to do all that, you see, because the central government—the one that heads up in Edinburgh and London—withholds big grants to education in Glasgow unless we use their books and courses and

these tell them that every boy has a chance to be an Andrew Carnegie and that the affair of 1776 was a sort of Bolshevik uprising. Then, too, they withhold grants to our police unless they can control them."

Much additional light came also from attending a meeting of the Glasgow Trades Council last night. It was a highly representative and thoroughly orderly affair, with some very intelligent men in attendance, including the two or three who reported progress for the strike of the local musicians. All the representatives of the city's 350 locals of the various labor unions and of twenty-one branches of the Independent Labor Party listened with great interest to the "brother and comrade" who came from North Ireland to solicit funds for the striking linen workers. All appeared very generally in favor, too, of making a great success of the plans for the general strike on the next Monday. "And, mind, the procession will move whether we're given permission by the city or no!" The business was conducted with most exemplary expedition and decorum. Here as well as at home the average union member can give the average citizen points on parliamentary procedure and then beat him to a frazzle! But it was perfectly evident that the Conservatives who were in attendance had little show and less courage. The report of the official who had just been up to London and in touch with the national leaders was given cheers when he stated that in his opinion "Mr. J. Facing-both-ways Thomas" had been finally brought down off the fence and could now be counted among the radicals. So, after duly extended and enthusiastic comment on the fact that labor had never in the history of the movement been so united as now in its fight against war, the crowd took appropriate steps in full preparation for enforcing the proposed nation-wide general strike and for setting up the Glasgow Soviet to act on the orders of the National Council of Action the instant the government



should make bold to begin war with Russia in defiance of the wishes of British labor. What opposition there was to this was effectually overcome by the contention that technically the plan was a purely emergency measure and would give way to ordinary governmental and unionistic institutions shortly after the country had been properly paralyzed, the war made impossible, and the decisive power of the worker fully demonstrated. In the same breath, however, the radicals, while granting the point technically, gave plenty of evidence that in their opinion, ordinary government wouldn't get a show in a long time, if ever again, once the National Council and the local labor groups were in the saddle.

One of the more conservative men in the meeting proved to be with the Workmen's Educational Alliance, which tries to bring to the workers all over the country the teachings of ordinary economics and other subjects at the hands of very good instructors. One of the meeting's more radical leaders is with the Labor College, a similarly national enterprise for working-man instruction but more in the sense of class propaganda than education, since it is devoted to the spread of the Marxian doctrine of inevitable class conflict. This latter school here enrolls about one thousand students. In very friendly relation with it is the barking haranguer of factory crowds heard the other day at the shipyard's gate—he's called the "Sinn Fein Consul to Glasgow." He certainly supports the claim of those who say that the Irish are at the bottom of much of the trouble here. He was with the Labor College secretary when I called:

"If England doesn't recognize the Irish Republic soon, then we have our biggest card still to play. That's war between Britain and America! We have the whole programme laid out—with all the sore points ready to our hands. 'Twill be the thing to put the British lion on his back—



and, of course, 'twill wreck America, too. But 'twill bring the freedom of Ireland. And it's next on the programme!"

It was hard work to keep from striking him! I'm sorry now that I felt it necessary to leave in order to hang onto a proper control of hands and tongue. The cold-blooded fiendishness of the plan of the man—and, evidently, of his friends—equals or excels anything the Germans were able to imagine. Naturally, it makes a man wonder if a large part of it should not bear the "Made in Germany" label. Certainly no plan could possibly bring greater satisfaction to the enemies of Britain, whether in Ireland, Germany, or Russia. Certainly, too, each day's transpirings appear more and more to one over here to represent not so much a war for Ireland as a general and all but world-wide campaign against the British Empire.

But, without doubt, also, men could easily be instigated to most anything if they must live among the thousands who rent those dreadful one-room apartments such as I visited. In one of them I saw a woman preparing a meal on the combined kitchen, dining-room, and parlor table. The husband lay on a high bed and was cursing everybody from the landlord up. The bed was quite high—so as to give a place underneath for the children to stand up before they went to sleep on the floor! There were no clothes or baggage of any kind in sight. A broken toilet served three families; a single tiny faucet, or tap, and sink out on the stairs between floors had to serve six families! All the washing of the three families hangs out in the passageway or "close," because there is no outdoor portico of any kind—nothing but the squalor of a stone building nearly a hundred years old. All at "nine bob" a week—or, ordinarily, ten dollars a month! If it couldn't be guaranteed to drive a man—or a woman—to drink, I don't know what could! As a matter of fact the death-rate of these places is reported as almost exactly twice that in roomier and newer

quarters! The citizen nods about their badness but adds that we ought to have seen what the city could have shown before the health department got busy a few decades ago!

The result of all so far seen and heard would look about like this—subject to further seeings and hearings later on:

1. Nothing—neither higher wages, continuously successful municipal operation of the tramways and various other enterprises of which the Socialist councillors like to boast, nor even better treatment of the workers at the factories by means of shop committees or councils—nothing will avail to make Glasgow peaceful, prosperous, and happy as long as the housing conditions are as bad as they are. Nor as long—and of the two this is much the more important—nor as long as so large a proportion of the city’s workers suffer from the unsteadiness of the job for which both shipbuilding and docking are noted. The whole place is suffering from a hard and chronic case of the intermittent chills and fever of job-and-no-job, complicated by the “Tiredness and Temper” bred in the darkness of those aged one and two room tenements.

2. It is inconceivable that prohibition could ever be made effective so long as these two underlying conditions obtain. Nor until, also, a long educational campaign has been gone into. (The connection between such bad conditions and John Barleycorn was pointed out by one of my near-down-and-out companions in the neighborhood of some bad lumber camps: “The drunker ye be the less ye’ll be a-mindin’ of the flies and bugs. And when ye sober up, ye’re used to ’em. See?”)

3. The local “Captains of Industry” will be disappointed with the results of their embryo “welfare” enterprises—and probably, as a result, very sore with their workers—until they can help the city to improve the housing conditions and regularize, at least to a considerable extent, the Clyde bank’s jobs.

4. A considerable part of the planning of the leaders of the national unions and the Council of Action, as well as of the local Anti-Rent Strike is definitely political. "If our present unity can be maintained . . . the Labor Party will come into power," says one of the "London Soviet" leaders. "A successful strike here next Monday should elect several more Socialist city councilmen," says one of the officials of the Glasgow Trades Council.

5. In my opinion America is most fortunate in Mr. Gompers's unfriendliness to the organization of a labor party. Certainly the American worker without it is much better off than the British worker with it. But "Sam" may change his view if he comes to believe that American employers are organizing to break up his organization industrially. Then we shall probably be in for such constant and acute uproar as they have here. As here, the workers will fight now with the strike and other industrial weapons to gain political ends and then, the next day, use political weapons to gain industrial ends.

6. As explained by a very intelligent young woman connected with a social-service enterprise and a leader among the Socialists, such demonstrations as that planned for Monday furnish the only way of getting any kind of action out of the city's submerged thousands. "You see, they are too drunken and ignorant—too propertyless and hopeless—to understand us when we try to tell them the causes of their misery—or to care to make any effort toward their own betterment. But if we can get them to take action in the form of a one-day strike, then that makes it easier to get them to vote, a few weeks later, to do away with the system which permits their degradation."

According to that, any wise group of citizens or owners in any state or city anxious to make the established order of society work successfully, should try even to *force* upon its submerged thousands the enjoyment of such practical

properties as steady jobs, decent homes, maximum opportunities, and other things worth conserving. Such citizens could be pretty sure that such conservings would not fail to make their possessors conserve.

7. Just how it comes about that the chief centre of a country noted for its religious scruples and its sectarian grit and backbone should also be famous for its degradation and radicalism is open to anybody's guess. My own is that the situation is much the same as in some of the Pennsylvania steel towns where the good Scotch Presbyterians get quite "het up" over Sunday movies but trouble apparently very little over twelve, eighteen, and twenty-four hour shifts for the population's thousands. But, after all, I suppose most of us had better go easy with the casting of the first stone, considering how slow we have all been to see the close connection between men's bodies, their daily job, and not only their daily bread but also their daily doings, dreamings, and dogmatizings.

. . . . .

Hope to make Edinburgh to-night and to-morrow begin in Middlesbrough another episode.

Middlesbrough, Newcastle District,  
Sunday, August 22nd.

"Fed up!" Those were the words in my mouth—and mind and body—this morning on getting out of bed after the usual "morning exercises" (highly recommended for eye and hand) of hunting fleas and other beasties. In spite of my momentary elation following the complete success of a very speedy and well-executed "enveloping movement" on Mr. Flea, "Fed up" certainly described my state of mind as I contemplated the very dirty and much torn sheets and pillow-cases, the ancient and abbreviated hand-towel left by the last "guest," and the broken window-panes



scattered in pieces on the floor, with the weather cold enough for snow!

When I asked about fresh sheets last night, the maid answered: "Oh, we never take only respectable people, so it's quite all right." Later a huge South African negro laborer proved to be one of the boarders in good standing.

Even at that the boarding-house is a lot better than the one to which a policeman took me in the rain last evening—where a bed could be had for two shillings, in the same small room with seven very tough-looking white and black, English and foreign, ship and steel workers. As a matter of fact, this seems the best in the town that will permit the kind of clothes necessary for covering the ground getting the contacts desired. As it is, and in spite of my tough appearance, a boiler-maker—a rough and low type of fellow he certainly was—nearly spotted me last night in a pub.

"If Hi wuz you, Hi'd walk right in ter see the fountain-'ead o' these steel works 'ere, and sye, 'Hi wants ter see the manager!'—just like thot," he counselled when we first started talking. "With wot ye've done in Hamerica, ye'll get on fine 'ere."

We got along well together, though he seemed to have trouble to place me. Finally he explained:

"Now ye asked me a w'ile back ter 'ave a pint with yer, didn't ye?—yuss—and I said 'No,' didn't I?—yus—wull, thot wor becuz Hi wuz considerin'. Yer see, Hi allus mikes it a rule never ter 'ave a pint with a stringe mon right off like without considerin'. Wull . . . wull . . . wull, *now* Hi've considered! 'Ere, miss, tike our order! Yuss, a pint o' bitters awnd 'arf a pint o' mild! Thot's it. Wull, cheerio! Awnd a good plice fer ye on Monday!"

Then, to return courtesies he called his friend: "'Ere, Bill! 'Ere's a young feller from Hamerica and 'e's tellin' me—now wuzn't yer tellin' me? Didn't Hi sye ter ye—a



moment ago, like. . . . Wuzn't yer tellin' me? . . . " and his tongue drifted off the job along with his unsteady eye.

"Wull, wull, come on, come on! Wot wuz it yer wuz a-syin' to 'im? Come on now! Carry on!" urged his friend, but to no purpose.

Just as I had begun to think my newest chum was too far gone to give further information on the state of the town's jobs and conditions, or to introduce me to more of his companions, drunk or sober, he seemed suddenly to get hold of himself. Perhaps he was awakened by the subconscious bell of alarm and danger sounded by some sixth sense which, whether the threat is against our body or our spirit, seems almost never to go quite to sleep at the general high headquarters of the soul of any of us.

"Wull, se 'ere!" he brought up with amazingly sudden steadiness and seriousness. "Yer mye be from Hamerica—I don't know—but Hi *do* know as ye appear ter me like some'at more'n a poor workin' man like meself. Thot ye do, in God's truth! Now, ye'll not misunderstawnd me" (business of grasping my hand and transfixing me with a serious but somewhat wavering eye so as to soften the contemplated thrust); "ye'll not misunderstawnd me, mind, but yer heye and all—wull, I've seen gentlemen—yuss, *several* times—tho it's mostly me pals, Bill and the big 'un there. *But—wull, now, tell me, as mon ter mon, eyen't yer pullin' me leg?*"

It took a good deal of talking, but finally he was fairly satisfied and when we parted at the sound of the closing bell and the call of: "Time, gents, time! Move along, now! Move along!" he called back quite pleasantly his: "Righto! Hi'll see yer 'ere Monday night!"

So, with such a warning as that, I'm glad to be in a place that will permit sinking a point or two lower in the scale of soiled shirt, dirty soft collar or muffler, and unshaved

face now that the search for jobs or at least for confiding acquaintances begins to-morrow morning.

So far he's the only one—except the hag in Glasgow. So the wonder still remains that people are so quick to accept me at the near-bottom valuation proclaimed by face and cap and clothes. A wife last night, for instance, in an amusement parlor became perfectly friendly the moment I gave a word and a smile to her beshawled and sickly little baby.

“Number twelve she is—*awnd bright!* W'y, w'en 'er fawther comes 'ome at midnight, mebbe—'e's a 'slinger'—that is, wull, if yer wuz a stevedore, y' understawnd, you'd 'ave the chawnce at the job afore 'e would, d' ye see? Thot's because 'e's a slinger. Awnd w'en 'e comes 'ome—day or night, ye might sye—'ere's the byby as chipper as all! . . . Yes, there's only five others of the twelve livin', or, as yer might sye, four. Ye see, I don't count the oldest. We don't keep 'im awnd 'e don't keep—nor 'elp us. 'E lives and works at the ice-cream shop. Twenty-two, 'e is—awnd blind. So, ye see, 'e's no good to us so there's no need ter count 'im, now is there? Cataracks—yes, cataracks, 'twas thot done fer 'im—*a few days after 'e wuz born.*”

Neither men nor women seemed to be suspicious in the pubs visited yesterday in Newcastle down near the docks in a district full of that fearful poverty, drunkenness, and degradation into which it is so amazingly easy to walk at almost any time and place in the big cities over here, especially the shipping cities.

“Gimme a cigarette, mate?” came from a young woman of alert eye and intelligent face among the crowd of men and women pressing up to the whiskey bottles and beer pumps. One of her young friends had a face like a perfect Madonna though she was extremely drunk. “Well, you see, I've been suspended for givin' the thirsty boys too much beer on my night turns at the 'ospital. And just now

I've done twenty-one days—seven for being drunk and fourteen for assaultin' the bloody officer, y' understand? . . . Yes, I can kick a man pretty precise when I try, d' ye see? . . . No, I don't want to be seen smokin' this cigarette on the street. You see, I was born a sergeant's daughter, yes, sir, right over there in your country—in Alabama. . . . I'll smoke it later. 'Why, 'ello, 'usband Jack, back again!' . . . I call 'im 'usband—the court makes 'im pay me a pound a week for my baby. Yes, if I smoked it right now everybody 'round 'ere would talk."

And from that she led into a serious and intelligent though half-drunken discussion of world politics! Verily, of all the traffic cops to be encountered at the multitudinous streets and intersections of the labyrinthine comings and goings of us humans, the strangest by far, as well as the strongest, with all its arbitrary and compelling alternations of "Stop!" and "Go!" is that one deep down within the heart of every one of us known as Self-Respect!

People standing at their doors, like rats over their drains, to see a neighbor's funeral, made a heart-sickening sight of degraded and broken-down humanity. One of the be-draggled wrecks, and not the worst of them either, came up to ask help for a "pen'n-orth o' bread" for her gray hairs. There and in other parts of the city the heart felt the pathos of such as the ragged child with one of his legs hardly thicker than his little cane, and of the numerous other pitiful possessors of bent or crippled little legs and backs.

It does seem certain that the general or common laborer over here, though English-speaking, is of a lower grade and level than even our lowest workers among the foreign-born. I wonder if the reason is that our lowest workers have, perhaps, a livelier hope—a larger faith that a better job may come, and with it a better life. The question is whether regularity of employment, if and when this is increased by the present national efforts, will be able greatly to help

these near-wrecks of the dock districts, their wives and families, as long as bad housing and "booze" continue to flourish as they do—with also the "bookie" to be named as the third of the destructive trio.

In Edinburgh Friday night a very sweet-faced woman swore softly and smiled sweetly in the strangest of combinations as she staggered into the car, and the capable anti-rent-strike woman speaker was interrupted by the usual drunken listeners.

"Yus, awnd a bonnie-lookin', bloo-ody object 'e wuz, too!" exclaimed one when Pussyfoot Johnson was mentioned.

Later the policeman explained that all was very quiet because everybody had been having a week's holiday and so had no money to "get up the pole." That is the same reason given for a comparatively quiet Saturday night here in Middlesbrough yesterday, though the drunken laborers and clerks could be counted by the dozen!

Just as I write these words at the lodging-house dining-table, in walk some footballers from Glasgow—mostly intoxicated in preparation for a match near by. They insist that they will vote either for no license or more license—that is, for Sunday opening. But on pressure they admit that the whiskey-beer, not the Sunday closing, accounts for the greater drunkenness there in Scotland than here. One of them explained:

"In London a Scotchman wa' asked by the barmaid: 'Jock, w'y do ye no' drink beer alone or whuskee alone?' and he says to 'er, he says: 'Uf Ah drinks whuskee aloon, then Ah'm dronk afoor Ah'm foo' (full). Uf Ah drinks beer aloon, then Ah'm foo' afoor Ah'm droonk. Wi' whuskee awnd beer, Ah'm joost fet (fit)—Ah'm both droonk awnd foo'!" "

For economical adaptation of means to end, efficiency engineers could hardly beat that!



Yesterday afternoon brought a "close-up" with the "bookies." After standing all morning in the vestibule of a crowded train from Edinburgh, and making the acquaintance of a whippet dog and its interesting owner, it seemed altogether proper to witness the races in which the attractive animal was entered.

Everything about it is calculated to make whippet-racing an exciting occasion. Inside the fence hundreds of dogs, mostly in handsome blankets, are tugging wildly at their chains, barking and howling at the top of their lungs, with occasionally an almost human piercing scream of hysteria. Nearly two score "bookies" are displaying their wager-boards and shouting: "Two to one on the Blue! Two to one on the Blue!" while men and boys rush up with their wagers of a "bob" or a "quid" (pound). When the starter's whistle sounds the holders or "slippers," each with his dog, take their places at the upper end of the string runways, each of these being about three feet in width. Then the "runners-out" endeavor to fix the attention of the held but howling, barking, shrieking, and squirming canine contestant upon the towel in their hands. Waving it wildly and shouting and whistling madly, these runners-out back off down the one hundred and ninety yards to the finish-line. With the count, the slippers grasp their dogs by the scruff of the neck and their tails, arms far back, Mr. Dog's hind legs high in the air. Ready! Bang! goes the pistol! Forward go the slippers' arms and, like brown streaks, down the lanes run the dogs—really at marvellous speed—each to grab the towel from its runner-out, or failing this to start a howl and a fight for one which a near-by contestant holds and shakes in its mouth. Up goes the flag for the—yes, by George, for the Red not the Blue! "That's a bit of orl right, eh, wot, mate!" Down surges the crowd in glee while, with impassive faces, the bookies hand out the winnings from their money satchels.



Few of the crowd of working men or clerks seemed to watch the races for themselves very closely; the judge's flag was evidently enough to show them either to get their winnings or how to mark their performance records so as to make them a help to more successful wagers later. Yesterday there were nine dogs entered for each of sixty-five heats! Imagine the yelping of that aggregation, each one of them on the verge of nervous prostration in its desire to start for the towel! A prize of sixty-five pounds will reward the winner and the gains or losses will reward or punish the hundreds of gamblers on every heat.

"Some dogs stop 'alf way. Some don't. Some get mad. Some don't. We study the character of the dogs and those that 'andle them—the ways and 'abits as well as the performances of all of them," a bookie explained. "*We* can't lose. The figures will get 'em—bound to, if they keep at it long enough. Yes, that's true with the dogs and the 'orses both. . . . But still, I just couldn't live without gambling—impossible. And I've got a boy who 'as more of a 'ead for figures than I 'ave. 'E'll be a wonder at this business."

Well, for that "fed up" feeling of this morning, the only palliative seems to be a liberal application of that life-saver: "It's a great life—forlorn humans, fleas, and all—if you don't weaken!" So I guess I can "stick it" a few more weeks.

Anyway, the whole country appears this morning to be much fed up itself. All the papers, including the particular weekly murder-and-scandal sheet which outsells all others combined, are viewing most seriously the possibility of a huge, national disaster in the miner's strike ballot now proceeding toward a probably unfavorable outcome. In addition, the Electrical Trades Union goes further in its threat to strike and so tie up all industries because the National Federation of Employers continues to stand be-



THE CROWD WAITS AS THE BOOKIES MARK UP THEIR PREFERENCES  
AT THE WEEK-END WHIPPET RACES.



CROWDS LISTENING TO THE SMOOTH-TONGUED SALESMEN OF  
"RIOT, RACING, OR RELIGION—REPRESENTATIVES OF A BETTER  
CHANCE IN EITHER THIS WORLD OR THE WORLD TO COME."



hind a Sheffield firm in refusing (since July 2) to require union membership of their *foremen*! Dockers at London and almost all other points are reported in constantly worse condition following wide-spread lack of work—partly because the high wages have attracted many into that field. All city employees in Cardiff have downed tools in sympathy with the city's track-layers; these make the same demand as put their friends off the job there that night at Newport. Everywhere the dockmen's unions are lambasting the miners' unions for their "ca-canny" methods of sabotage. The general secretary of the "Middle Classes Union" also comes out against the evil ways of the miners. Smaller strikes all over the country are too numerous to mention. In Newcastle the employees of the Co-operative Wholesale Society are striking against their employers. These employers, of course, are themselves union leaders and workers.

All this confusion is worse confounded by the fact that many of the Lords and other leaders who fulminate against the unreasonableness of labor also proclaim heatedly that the present government (party) is possessed of "Squandermania," is inefficient in controlling the cost of living as well as in handling the Mesopotamia situation, and is altogether unworthy of respect. This, of course, is taken by many of the labor leaders to justify their philosophy of "Direct Action," that is, of using industrial strikes to oppose and undermine the government party when their votes fail to do it. Meanwhile the government has intercepted and published wireless messages showing that the Bolsheviks in Moscow consider labor's paper, the *Herald*, one of their "institutions abroad."

The next four weeks look like exciting ones. Meanwhile the next few days should reveal something about the happiness or unhappiness of this Pittsburgh of Great Britain.

## CHAPTER V

### WITH THE 'ANDS ON SMELTING STAGE, CINDER PIT AND CAST BED

Middlesbrough, Yorkshire,  
August 25th.

"Full up! Not a chance! Full up!"

After getting that from a number of "gaffers" in charge of the various blast-furnaces and smelting stages which make this district famous, I'm for seconding the motion of the fellow-boarder here last night.

"It's all very well to be told by this chap and that: 'There's a good berth 'ere and a fine crib there!' When you get there it's always just let out and they're 'Full up!' Always 'Full up!' "

This is certainly the land of the strangle-hold on the job. If the Englishman's home is his castle, then the Englishman's job is the portcullis and drawbridge thereof, for carefully reeling up and stowing carefully away inside the castle every night.

"Since the war, y' understand, the unions 'ere 'as got much more powerful," a mechanic explained one factor of this matter of scarce jobs, especially the skilled ones. With his helper he was taking a long loaf at the foot of the hoist at one of the big hand-charged blast-furnaces. "At some works the union agents will be waitin' for ye outside the gates and will warn ye away if ye're not one o' them. If ye gets past them into the line, or 'market,' that stands over there every day just before the shift goes on, the gaffer's likely to save 'imself later trouble by takin' the union men first. . . .



"My boy, 'e's apprenticed now to a joiner," he continued with what is certainly a real demonstration of the shape this problem takes there in the very castle of the worker. "'E's only fourteen and 'e cawn't be finished till 'e's twenty-one. But, ye see, I daren't wait till 'e's sixteen, 'cause there mightn't be any place for 'im then and there 'appens to be one now. Ye see, that's the point. Yes, thot'll be meanin' seven years as apprentice instead of five from his start at a pound a week with a few shillin' added every birthday. But—well, 'e's sure of a place now fer life—and there's always work for joiners—always. Say, ye'd think 'e was savin' the 'ole family from ruin, thot important 'e is."

This quick jump "from the cradle to the union"—out of short pants into overalls—sounds like the way some of our American millionaires are said to telegraph certain famous boys' schools engaging a place the moment the nurse whispers: "Masculine gender, sir!"

"But I'm thinkin' serious o' gettin' a labor job myself," the mechanic went on. "The rises (raises) ain't been fair, like. Now, 'ere's my 'elper. All the war awards 'as raised 'im 195 per cent above pre-war, w'ile they've raised me only 125 per cent, d' ye see? Thot makes 'im draw almost the same as me. But if any job's wrong, it's me that gets all the blame, not 'im. Now, thot's wrong, all wrong. And then 'ere's these dockers and all sorts of laborers besides. No six or seven years of apprenticin', d' ye understand? nor anything, and they gettin' their sixteen bob a day! Thot's wrong, all wrong."

This same matter of *comparative* standings and *relative* wages has been at the bottom of much unhappiness among the workers at home. And for much the same reason—the comparatively rapid, or over-rapid, increase in the pay of the unskilled worker due to the war's demand for munitions. On a machine which had been made fool-proof by the skill

of the inventor the unskilled worker could turn out a huge number of pieces and so could show earnings which upset all the previously established levels of earnings and other importances by which the skilled machinist or electrician enjoyed the sense of his superiority—and his wife's and family's superiority—in the working community. Apparently this important difference between the earnings and standings of the unskilled and the skilled worker is much less here now than in America, whether so largely due to the war or not. It sounds strange, for instance, to hear that with the dockers getting two shillings, bricklayers draw less than three shillings per hour. If the irregularity of the docker's work is given as the reason for the two shillings, it could also be urged on behalf of the bricklayer.

On the smelting-stage the first and second hands make their fifteen and twenty pounds a week against their laborers' five to seven. This serves as a sort of bait for keeping the less fortunate workers hard on the job, guarding strenuously their position in the line—with its established chance at the higher jobs when they open up. The managers say that the high wages of the first and second hands prove how hard it is to get the worker to consent to a reduced wage under any circumstances. For after originally establishing the high tonnage rates, they later took away the necessity of the old and hard work of hand charging the furnaces by installing the electric charging cranes. Then the managers took from the first hand the need of paying his helpers out of his own pay. Next the industry increased his tonnage by enlarging the furnaces. Finally, it became desirable to lessen his responsibility and need of skill by putting a "sample passer" over him. But all this failed to permit any chance of seriously decreasing his tonnage rate. Hence the larger and larger weekly earnings.

All this money at the top helps to put onto the smelting stage—with a fair go at something like a career with its

opportunity up—such a worker as I met yesterday: “Yuss, I wore borned in thus bloo-ody furnace, ’ere! Thirty bloo-ody years . . . but I’m mikin’ good money now.”

From fields where the larger earnings at the top are lacking in comparison with other lines, men keep moving out. As a well-educated boy in a very antique smelting shop put it to-day:

“For five years I was in the ‘lab’ here—testin’ samples, you know. But what’s the use? You can never do anything but make analyses all your life—nothin’ else. So ’ere I am third ’and on the smelters—and ’opin’ to be first, one of these days with good luck. That chap over there—‘charge-wheeler’ ’e is—shovellin’ that lime and heavy iron-stone into the ‘chargin’ pans’ all day—well, ’e’s just left the ‘lab’ after ten years. Ten years as good as lost, in spite of all ’is brains.”

Yes, it looks as though the job’s future possibilities are about as important as its hourly rates. Of course, there is the danger that this may mean the discouragement of initiative by putting too high a value upon the mere passing of time by the holders of the various places in the line, with the deadening results so often noted in civil service. Doubtless, the managers here, however, require a certain amount of ability in addition to the serving of the time as a condition to taking the next step up. Still, it looks certain, too, that management here does give men more assurance of their job with less strictness than in America, judging from the way I can walk all through these plants and loaf in them by the hour without getting into any trouble and also from the way all the workers, for instance, shrug their shoulders about coming into the works and onto the job with a good deal of whiskey and beer in their bodies and more or less in their clothes without apparently much danger of the “call-down” they would be sure to get in “the States.” “It’s not so bad as it used to be when we’d

bring in beer along with us to work—by the gallon,” is about the best the workers can say. The testimony among them, however, is mainly to the effect that a worker who is discharged for being drunk on the job is likely to “get the sack” without the union’s possessing the power to put him back for a long time, at least.

More than a few of the older workers, besides the mechanic quoted, appear much troubled by the union’s insistence that a boy turned twenty-one shall be paid the same daily rate as the oldest in the trade. So the result of all this comes pretty close, on the whole, to establishing in industry here as well as in government something like civil service, especially in the fields where piece rates or payment by results cannot be practised. This is caused, at least partly, by the unions, though mainly, I should say, by the comparative scarcity of jobs. At any rate, if you couple it with the big difference in the education of the workers and of the “masters,” which it in turn helps to cause, you are pretty sure to have the cause of the class lines which so definitely mark off the workers from much hope of entering the group of management in particular or the “master” class in general. In other words, the class line is largely an equipment line which follows as the night the day, upon what looks to me like a nation-wide scarcity of jobs. So it comes that the system of civil service or near civil service, when once established in industry for making oversure of the job, tends in turn to discourage education, initiative, and ambition by making them more or less valueless on the job—or, if valuable, then valuable only if you take a lot of risk of losing your place in the line.

In that connection it is very surprising to hear the workers discuss seriously among themselves the question of whether they get the best treatment from the gaffers who have worked up from the bottom or from the others—from the rankers or the toppers. I don’t remember ever to have



heard it discussed by the workers in my seven months of laboring at home.

"Yer see 'e knows all the tricks and wants ter allus be showin' as 'ow yer cawn't pull 'is leg," one of the workers at one big smelting shop settled the discussion against too much promotion from the ranks. A soldier on a train last week—he was himself a petty official—was the strongest in his opposition:

"Hi never seen a ranker make a good hoffer yet—awnd Hi've 'ad 'em over me a lot—hadjutants and all. In the hexercises and heverywhere it's allus 'Hi've been there meself, boys, and it cawn't be done. Hi'm too wise, boys.' You know 'ow it is. No, sir, never one."

They might be right, judging from one manager of open hearths, who, after the usual "Full up!" made his viewpoint sound pretty sane, too:

"If the company wants me to run this place I can't let the union do it for me—nor the men, now, can I? And if they pull my leg once or twice, I'm done in for good and I ought to get the sack myself. So I'm on the lookout for all the dodges I used to help the boys work when I was one of them. That's why you could take your time about joining the union so far as I'm concerned if I had a job for you. But there's no chance."

Another "super" with something of the same experience in his twenty-five years around a blast-furnace from bottom to top, was equally sure—after he also had shaken his head for the everlasting "Full up!"—that the men working on time and not tonnage are a lot of first-class loafers who come with woozy heads onto the job every day after spending most of their money at the pubs:

"It's not such workers but the new American furnaces—like that one we're building over there—that we've got to look to for cheaper iron. They require about one man to the ten or twelve that these old tanks have to have. Of



course, you know that 'gun' there—for putting in the plug after the furnace has been tapped for the 'cast'—is American, too. It saves labor and is much safer, too."

Down in the checker-chambers, up on the "stage," over by the rolls—every place where I've been talking these last two days—most of the workers seem surely to have picked up the idea—mainly from the experience of their relatives and friends—that America somehow gives a better chance to "get on" and "be somebody." That being so, it is almost comical to watch their faces when I tell them that most of the steel workers in America are still working the long twelve-hour day and the full week, many of them working a double or twenty-four-hour shift every other Sunday, instead of the regular week-end stoppage which is regular here everywhere except in the blast-furnaces. All the variations of incredulity, surprise, disgust, and finally British pride, run over their features before they obtain enough answers to their questions to support the comprehension and acceptance of the amazing news. "No!—Now?—Twelve hours without time out for lunch or breakfast!—In America?—And seven days a week! Well, hail Britannia! I supposed we was bloo-ody well the lawst! Blime, yer don't sye! Wull, now, Hi sye!—" and so on ad infinitum.

"Proper slavery it was afore we changed 'ere," a fire-heater put it. "Bloo-ody murder—nothin' less! Awnd after the long double turns for chingin' the shifts—twenty-four bloo-ody hours—a feller would 'ave ter stop in fer a pint or two. Then the fust thing 'e knowed, 'e wuz done fer. 'Course 'e wuz all done in ter start with, like."

It is amazing to learn that the eight-hour turn was obtained for the majority of the country's blast-furnace men as far back as 1897!

"Twenty-five per cent more we been gettin' out of the bloomin' furnaces, too, since the change," was the claim

made by one of the men who remembered the old days. There is doubtless considerable room to doubt the accuracy of his figures after so long a time.

In general the attitude toward America appears a very good indicator of a man's general information and prejudices here. If he is certain that the whole of our country is in the hands of a dozen super-corrupt and, therefore, super-wealthy men he's pretty sure to be close to the radicals and the Bolsheviks, or, at least, the extreme Socialists. Of these, the two days of listening here would seem to indicate surprisingly few—certainly, at least, in comparison with South Wales and the Clyde bank. Yesterday afternoon permitted several hours out in the open fields up above the furnaces and at the entrance to the mines that gave the district its start by giving it its Cleveland “iron-stone,” or iron-ore. “Cleveland iron” is one of the industry's basic terms. From the mouths of these mines half-way up the range of hills you can see with one sweep the scores of plants in the level—and lovely—plain below, and the reasons for them in the shape of the ore beneath your feet, the coal-mines of both Yorkshire and Durham near by, the limestone only a few miles away, and, finally, the well-dredged channel of the Tees River which brings big boats from all over the world into Middlesbrough harbor for the steel and the numberless other products of the Leeds districts farther inside.

At the “winding-house” (electric) of one of the “drifts,” or horizontal mine-mouths, on the hillside, good luck brought me into conversation with a pair of the best-informed workmen met anywhere yet on the job.

“All too far the big leaders down in London are goin’—Bob Smillie and all. . . . Oh, aye, it's probably as unsafe for labor to have *all* the power as for capital. Co-operation between 'em's best. Co-operation and not nationalization. No, not nationalization. Why, if one of the post-office

clerks or one at the income-tax office was to say 'Thank you,' we'd fair fall over dead! They're all on their jobs 'for the duration,' like, you know, so what do they care? . . . No, the Independent Labor Party is a lot of one-sided extremists."

"Oh, aye!" they both exclaimed when told of my observation that few of the workers seemed to read much of the daily newspapers outside of the sporting news, after they had amazed me with their own daily reading of the doings of Parliament. "Few o' the miners understand about this strike that's planned—though they *do* see this company puttin' up plants with money that should go to Excess Profits Tax.

"And you're right about your 'booze and bookies,' too! They're the greatest enemies of the working class. Fair disgusting it was when the war brought a beer shortage. Queues a quarter mile long outside every public 'ouse with people inside fightin' their way up to the bar, swillin' down as much as they could 'old—fair eatin' it up, you understand—goin' out to vomit it up and then gettin' back into the line again! One man that was standin' for Parliament jumped in durin' one shortage and with the 'elp of his influence got three barrels sent into a thirsty district as a special favor. You can believe me or not, but it got 'im 'is seat in the 'ouse! Yes, sir! Disgustin'—fair disgustin'—it all is!"

"Fair astonishing" it was to learn a few moments later that they were both officials in the local iron-stone miners' union!

So all questions to date have supported the report encountered in London that this is a conservative and comparatively quiet sector on Britain's industrial and political front. The reason is beyond me—so far, at least. But there is a reason, without doubt. Perhaps it will be a whole family of reasons as there on the Clyde bank—hope it can be

found, too, without requiring too many of my rapidly diminishing store of weeks.

After the final days here and in Sheffield it won't be particularly heart-breaking to part with all my faithful little bed fellows—though it does give daily pleasure to note my constantly increasing skill as a hunter and slayer. Every morning now permits its boast of at least one trophy won by quickness of eye or speed of finger. Yesterday it was four! It was almost as good a setting-up exercise for my “mentals” as my ordinary gymnastics are for my “physicals.” Somehow it made the day look certain to be successful! However, they contrive to beat me when it comes to results. Last night I counted up to a hundred uncomfortable bites before growing too disgusted and homesick for further mathematical research.

Perhaps, come to think of it, it was this depressing arithmetic of discomfort and disrespectability that made it sound so trifling when the highly self-conscious minister last Sunday night thundered and pounded so hard to prove that the only way England can solve her present serious troubles is for everybody to be “washed in the blood of the Lamb.” He made a great point of the fact that “sin has a way of coming home to roost on the head of the offender—that’s always the nature of sin!” He appeared unwilling to grant that the same is equally true for virtue, the difference being, indeed, that we call our doings good or bad, sinful or virtuous, according as their results are observed, in the long run, to “come home to roost” in happy and desired, or unhappy and undesired ways. What he seemed to think least worth noticing is that one of the most important of all the “roostings” that may follow upon this or that line of doings is the resultant standing or lack of standing in the eyes of our neighbors and fellow citizens. So it is our own attitudes of praise or blame or indifference that are determining to a very considerable extent the conduct of our



fellows. For that reason, at least one very present and practical function of the church is evident. So while he spoke I wondered whether he would ever discover any connection between the great number of drunken men and women streaming at the moment out of the open pubs, and a church preoccupied with the refinements of a mystical process whereby "white robes" are to be achieved by the almost unrecognizable world he was describing, a world in which such things as the Great War and the great war weariness, the Indispensable Job and the equally Indispensable Self-Respect, evidently had no part. If such a church assigns but little social stigma to the drunkenness and gambling which are favored by the limitations of the job, and if these limitations mean that sobriety and initiative can bring comparatively little above the hourly wage-rate of the twenty-one-year-old—well, what difference to the eye of the worker is visible between the roosting manners of the brood of current morals and immorals?

The church and the "working class" here are certainly a long way apart—farther, on the whole, probably, than at home. But we certainly have nothing to brag about in America. There the ordinary pastor seems to miss the point of both the driving compulsions and restrictions of the job upon the lower worker and also the rewarding opportunities possessed by the higher worker, the employer and the executive for finding in his job the satisfactions of a practical idealism which makes the pastor's emphasis upon his obscure and mystical blood-washing technicalities sound impractical, unrelated, and trivial.

Till the church learns better how much more—how infinitely more—our jobs are influencing our thinking than our thinking is influencing our jobs, both the earners of daily bread and the earners of daily jam and cake are likely to be less interested than they might in the kind of salvation so laboriously represented by salesmen who ap-



pear to realize so slightly where their "prospects" live and move and have their being—there on the job in the midst of its complex but absorbing aggregation of compulsions and rewards.

But all this more or less querulous philosophizing may mean merely that it's time to ring the bell for bed—now that I've done as I find myself doing every night in a sort of unconscious effort at "protective behaviour," namely, staying up as long as feasible in order to be as tired as possible when finally "I lay me down to sleep" in those dirty sheets in that vile room up-stairs.

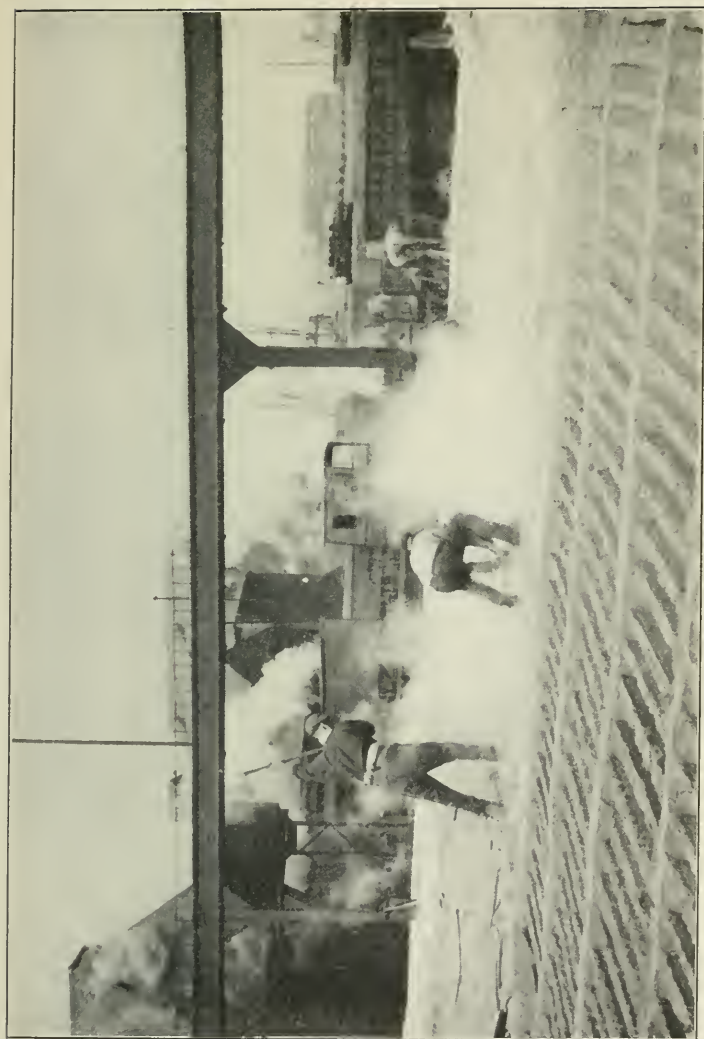
Middlesbrough,  
Thursday, August 26th.

A single day here can bring a most surprising combination of modern and old-fashioned establishments, all competing with each other in the same district. It seems strange that with good jobs so near by, men can be found willing to work where, for instance, two of them have to put all their strength together every time they want to open a furnace-door, as at one of the oldest "stages" in the place, or where the firemen have to sweat all day in the half-darkness of some salt-furnaces.

The outstanding thing is how regularly the attitude of the man at the bad place reflects his surroundings—partly, of course, because the worst conditions usually get the worst man, other things being anything like equal, and partly because these bad working conditions are sure to affect the worker's feelings and, therefore, of course, his attitudes; as, with darkness at their backs and the blazings in their faces, these firemen threw shovelful after shovelful into their roaring fire-beds beneath the salt-pans, they looked like creatures of another world. Their caps were tight-fitting and their trousers came only to their knees. Their stockings were heavy and their shoes rough. They had been at the work many years, and reported that they were

very glad to greet the eight-hour day. Their minds were not well informed on the coal strike and the other issues of the day though their convictions were very definite and very "anti." Though they said they could take a "blow" after getting their fires going, it was evident that the dim electric lights were unfavorable to reading—or to pleasant thoughts about anything. The loaders up-stairs around the tanks were stripped to the waist and working like mad. But they were in a light room and they knew that as soon as they emptied the tanks and put the clean white salt, still warm, into the trucks or railway cars, they could go home—with good pay for a full day in their pockets. It was impossible to stop for a chat with them, but I would wager real money that their ideas would be less radical than those of their mates in the dark passageway before the fires down-stairs. Practically always, too, the piece-rate worker feels himself enormously more the captain of his soul than does the time-worker.

At practically all the local blast-furnaces the casting of the long pigs of iron is done in sand-beds without any cover anywhere except in the shanty, for a little loaf in between jobs. "It's no place for a proper mon on a wintry day w'en yer fice is burnin' and yer back's in a bloody freeze, like," a red-faced but husky worker put it. Up on the platform at the very top of the big blast-furnace the "mon" and his helper emptied the hand-carts of coke, "iron-stone," and limestone into the cupola. Then when the "bell," or cover, was raised the tons of materials for the charge, or "burden," disappeared in the huge maw of the great upright iron beast as the flame and smoke roared out and up to the sky—while we stood off and hunched our shoulders to keep the mass of cinders from going down our backs. Except when in the tiny shed that houses the weights which control the "bell," the two men are exposed to every wind that blows.



SEPARATING THE "PIGS" FROM THE "SOW" IN A MIDDLESBROUGH "CAST-BED."  
At the rear can be seen the ships which carry the finished iron and steel products into all parts of the world.



Of course, against these winds and rains the boss up there is anchored by his tonnage pay. It runs around thirty shillings a turn—"accordin' to how she works." The boy, of course, also holds tight to the platform and the chance it gives at his superior's job. Meanwhile every worker knows that every wind and every cinder that makes the work more uncomfortable than a similar job down below has to be paid for, sooner or later, at so much per, before responsible men will stick. Likewise it is easy to observe from the apologetic manner of the men who confess themselves to be working at "the most out-of-date smelting shop in the 'ole district" that the management is either paying them more in order to save their self-respect—not very likely, probably, in a country of union rates—or is regularly paying the established and uniform rate to the poorest of the district's workers—men whose self-respect among their fellows is not enough to take them onto the "stages," of whose up-to-dateness they can daily boast to their pals at the pub. In either case the company is pretty certain to be getting less for the money paid its men than its better-equipped neighbors. In addition, also, it is undoubtedly having much more trouble getting along with them. Such men feel that they have the least of any in the neighborhood to lose by following the agitator—because they have the poorest jobs. Only those that have no job have less.

The busiest plant in England was one this afternoon where building, machinery, light, and arrangement were all of the latest pattern. A youngster of a "third ladle-man" told me with great enthusiasm about his progress up the line of jobs—also of his recent "'olidays" spent in carousings with "beer, whiskey, port, and 'tarts' (giddy young girls)." He showed, too, the loyalty which is likely to underlie such remarkable orderliness and surprising industry as the place exhibited when he suggested: "Say, the boss 'ere is the best there is. 'E's worked in Amer-



ica, tco. W'y don't you just walk in and ask 'im for a plyce?"

If others of the plants the same executive is said to manage are as good, the company ought to make a profit from the work its thousands of men turn out, after being able to pay the best of wages, as it must to get such energy. On the way out I kept wondering whether the men were getting much advantage from their wages in view of the number that called: "What's the néws, mate?" At first it seemed they must be interested in the Polish war or the League of Nations, but my reports did not get far. Of course, they meant: "Did Iron Hand or White Glove win?" Later, outside the gates, when I had a late-edition paper in my hand, a chap hurrying out asked about a little boy. I answered, yes, the little boy had "gone down that way." He looked at me in huge disgust—but forgave me when I let him take my paper and he quickly found to his delight that he had won the five bob he had been wise enough to put on "Little Boy"!

It is to be hoped that none of his relatives was among the band of shawl-covered women and trowsly-headed children who, apron or bag in hand, were strenuously combing over the cinder-dump in the eager search for tiny unburned "coals." . . . "The gov'yment tells us to economize so we wants to be patriotic and 'ere we are!"

The chances are pretty good—at least if he loses much—that my racing friend is of the same mind as a well-dressed, white-muffled, and clean, though red-faced, engineer encountered at a near-by pub:

"Yes, all of us drivers get our pound a day—or thereabouts. But what's the use? Ya can't save anything when you 'ave to pay thirty-two bob for these shoes w'at cost, say, twelve bob pre-war. . . . Course they's more drunks now. Thot's because o' the closin' hours. Ya see, everybody wants to get enough in 'im to 'carry on' till openin'

time again. And then, furthermore, it's rotten stuff nowa-days—just chemicals, that's bloody well all. W'y, one company pays a chemist a cool thousan' pounds to make the stuff knock you over without fair killin' ya! . . . Yes, o' course, 'alf of them loses it on the streets. That's because they drink it on an empty stomach. Now it's like this: if ya was drunk last night, then, o' course, you didn't tike no breakfast this mornin'—ya didn't want it. Instead, ya tikes a pint or two and perhaps some whiskey to steady up with, like. Well, it won't stay. No, ya can't make it. That's w'y ya see it on the street.

“Yes, I 'ave drove thousands of the American soldiers up to the trenches—with shells tearin' up the track all over the plyce. Ond we engineers gettin' only the same wyges as if we was soldiers! Never again fer me! Not any more army life! Fed up! Goin' fer mebbe a coupla days without no food—it was shelled into garbage on the wye up, mebbe. No, sir, no more! . . . Haig, yes, 'e's quite all right. But I tell ya Kitchyner was ambushed. 'E was at Loos: I seen 'im there with my owne yes. There's somethin' queer there—somethin' queer. But, o' course all them bloomin' hofficers 'ad to do was to stay away from the lines and keep 'emselves safe—just like the government's doin' now with Llide George at the 'ead of all of 'em. It's we citizens and workers as must be tret (treated) better. . . . Well, I'll see ya up there at the Rose and Crown to-morrow at two.”

It won't be necessary to turn up if it appears that more opinions can be encountered elsewhere. But it looks as though I'll have to leave town if I'm to avoid “following-through” with a “first hand” left a few hours ago. He was on the job at the furnace, but his words reeked of whiskey—also of world-wide adventure crowded into his life in addition to his twenty-eight years on the smelting stage—also, further, of friendliness.

"Say, now, old top, I'll call at your boardin'-house Saturday night an' you an' me are the chaps as can 'ave a large party together—just you an' me an' a few glasses an' bottles an' things, eh? Ta! Ta! Cheerio!"

Britain's Pittsburgh,  
Friday, August 27th.

That "one unfailing sign and symptom of fatigue—temper"—is sure to get a fellow pretty hard if he comes down from such discomfort as my open-faced garret affords, especially if then he has to hold in his hunger until the sloppy maids find it in their good pleasure to set on the table the usual ham and eggs. Strangely enough, too, anybody who not only feels as much of a bum as these nights make him feel, but in addition *looks* it, is very uncertain of his standing even in so punk a boarding-house as this—so uncertain that he hesitates to assert himself to the extent of using a little language on those same sloppy maids. Even though they look at the moment still lower down the scale than he does, he does well to reflect that they have behind them the power to put him out onto the street if they and their mistress don't like him. Besides, he must recall that each evening one of the two takes her turn at dolling up in a clean waist and skirt, silk or near-silk stockings, powder 'n' everything. Perhaps her hair still bears the marks of last night's grandeur, in which case it is quite enough to cow me with my unshaved face into proper meekness when added to the memory of filthy sheets and the disagreeable bed-fellows of the unpleasant night.

The same dreariness of the up-stairs which spills us roomers in unpleasant moods into the dining-room serves, of course, at the day's end, to hold us together in the little parlor into the late hours. The Jamaican negro keeps usually a dignified silence. Now that he has been promised a job when a certain steamer sails, he is considerably envied by several

of us fellow-boarders still in search of work. Every evening, too, he is either to be seen making the prettier of the maids a little present of fruit or else the lady herself volunteers the information—whether in the hope of creating competition, I do not know—that, “Last night it was chocolates. Very nice ’e is, you know, and quite a gentleman, too.”

The war bride of a young engineer who appears to have some humble sort of work does a very creditable job of weaving into her remarks the proper amount of alibis for their present fortunes—as also for their temporary unwillingness to bother with either home or children. If energy and determination are needed, she can be counted on to repair the family prospects shortly. Her stories of driving her ambulance through dangerous places in France and Flanders, and, later, of planting her strenuous fist in the impudent faces of those who at the docks were unlucky enough to use a certain nasty word in connection with her husband, make you feel sure that the proper job will somehow and some time be found here or elsewhere. Of course, a certain impression of masculinity and force comes from her amazingly free use of some of the war’s worst profanity in combination with the shortness of her closely bobbed black hair. With all that, strangely enough, appears also a very good education in the schools of Canada and Paris. With a better job for husband and a little more femininity for her, they might make a fine go at politics.

“Yes, sir, I’m a bit of a grammarian, you know,” the tall and quite respectable-looking ex-hotel-keeper just in from Newcastle assures you with a leer of proud certainty of achievement which evidently comes from a certain number of whiskies. “Aye, sir, ’tis a matter most important, this matter of grammar, and it’s considerable study I’ve given it. Take ‘rotten.’ Now you might say ‘rotten’—’ow much education you’ve ’ad, I’m not knowing, of course, you’ll pardon my sayin’ so, won’t you?—and I might say ‘rot-



ten'—and I've probably 'ad as much as you, first and last, seein' you'r 'ere from America and no job and all. Well, now, as I was sayin', we'd both say 'rotten.' Yes. Quite all right. But all the dictionaries—all the best dictionaries, that is, and I know them well, very well—they all say '*w-r-o-t-t-e-n*.' And, of course, I'm not a man to contradict them—not in spite of the studyin' I've done. No, I'm not that kind of man, you know what I mean?

"Languages, that's it, I'm a great man for languages—languages *and* grammar. You see, I worked years at night, portering in an Aberdeen hotel and had time to learn several very fine languages from the chef. He was an *Ey-talian* and a very learned man—and a very strong man, especially with the drink. Ten and twelve whiskies he would take regular every day. There was many others among the guests that I could wish was stronger with it—you know what I mean? Take Americans for instance. Very small tips they used to give—a tuppence or two—very small. That is, when they were sober. It took a few pints or a few whiskies to make 'em real cordial like to the 'elp. But there's few of us but are better for a bit of it now and then. Good beer never hurt anybody—and besides, the government's got to 'ave it—'s a necessity, you know what I mean?"

"With a bit of whiskey and he's quite all right," his sensible-looking wife would add quietly when the strain of the conversation—that is, the monologue—would become too great and he would all but fall upon the table in a doze. "But when he takes much more than his bit, it's best to get him to bed. I think I'll try now. Good night."

"It seems to me a bit too bad, you know," the same person came out with at breakfast the next morning, in, probably, a more or less unconscious effort to restore her face, "that the American Government loses so much money by means of prohibition that every one of us over here has to pay more for the sugar you send us."



It was a moment before I could get enough breath for a reply!

Later in the day her unhappiness was recalled when a woman in a butcher-shop explained that:

"Of course, we 'as to ask more for the British beef than that imported from America. There's a prejudice against it, you see. That would be, of course, because durin' the war and the rationin', there was some of it bad—yes, very bad. But, I must say, that much of that was the government's fault. Often and often it came to us in coal trucks (railway cars) and very dirty it was—yes, very dirty."

Since then I've been finding comfort in the words spoken about America by an intelligent-looking laborer who had to reply with a very unhappy and embarrassed expression, "I 'aven't any job just now," when I met him back of one of the big furnaces in the busiest of all the plants:

"I'm sorry I didn't sprain my ankle when I stepped onto the gang-plank to come back from the States that last time. A man over there on your side of the water 'as better wages and better living—better every way, as I see it—more self-respect. . . . No, I can't go back—the fares are too much for the wife and three children I got now. And they was all born, you might say, 'omeless. You see, we can't get anything but one room in the whole town, that crowded it is, now since the war. . . . 'First 'and' I was before I lost it. Now, I'll be bloody lucky to get set on as bricklayer's 'elper. And if I do get on, I'm fearin' the leaders will be takin' pounds out o' my pocket with their strikin's and agitatin's now that the miners look to be makin' trouble."

Luckily I had moved away just in time to sidestep the threat which came to him most vociferously from a gaffer who had evidently seen him and his sad face before:

"I'll not be tellin' ye again! Move along now, and be off! Or I'll see ye're locked up fer loiterin'!"

It was probably the contagious depression of the man's mood that brought my own low breakfast spirits close to

the explosion point a little later when I tried to get in touch with a company executive by using the telephone at the central post-office.

There are only two 'phones there at the centre of a district of about 140,000 people. One of those is usually engaged with "Toll." The other has to be properly wooed with the ringing of the handle at the side and the pressing of the receiver at your ear. When with good luck you get a chance to give the number and are exhorted to "Hold on!" you feel that at least the right expression is used for the maximum of grim patience and everlasting pertinacity required. One by one you press the two or three single pennies into the slot for the ringing of the bell and if all is working well you are again admonished to "Hold on!" A little later when you have raised your voice to its maximum carrying power, the clerk at the other end advises sweetly that you should "Speak a bit louder, please. You see, they can't hear you, sir!"

"Be good-natured until ten o'clock. The rest of the day will take care of itself." If that sign were on any desk here, as it used to be a long time ago at home, I think it would be wise to put off the use of the government 'phone until, say, eleven, at the earliest.

Of course, there ere enough makers of telephone complaints at home. The cure of such would doubtless proceed rapidly if they could be given a short treatment here, beginning with the search past numberless shops and apothecaries for the very rare station at some newsdealer's—with, usually, the admonition that for "trunk" or toll calls you must go to the central post-office!—followed next by the search for the pocketful of pennies required to make more than one or two calls. Probably it is just as well for the preservation of the proverbial British evenness of keel and temper that very slight use is apparently made of the 'phone here. The number-book for this whole district con-

tains only eighteen pages, at about 150 subscribers to the page—a total of 2,700 for about 140,000 of population—about two per hundred. Somehow or other I must find out how that compares with an average city at home—and, also, if possible, the cause of what is most obviously behind much of the trouble, namely, very bad equipment. From all that can be learned, charges are felt to be extremely high. Wonder if either the inefficiency or the reputed expensiveness of the service can be traced in any way back to that source of so many other evils, “Full up!” It would be easy to think of such telephones as one cause of the general criticism of the government, operated as they are by it, except for the fact that, in the nature of the case, comparatively few of the general body of citizens can afford to have much to do with it.

Perhaps this very abstinence is one of the reasons behind the fact that every day—even such a weary and near-explosive one as to-day—increases the original impression that the district contains comparatively few radicals or revolutionaries. So far, there hasn't been a sign of the street discussions of matters political and economic such as filled so many streets in Glasgow—as also both the working and non-working hours in the Welsh mine! A good many of the homes I find are pretty bad. The worst of them, however, are pretty sure to belong to stevedores and other dock workers, even though they are located quite close to the steel plants down in the very dirtiest and smokiest part of the town. There, by the way, is one of the vilest eating places yet encountered on the whole trip. I was amazed to find how soon I got used to the awfulest of smells and had no difficulty making a fearful aggregation of meat and potatoes take the edge off a very sharp appetite. Nevertheless, it is fairly certain that the families who live down there—and doubtless have lived there a long time—are considerably less happy than those who live in the other parts

of the city where the dirt is much less, though it is scarcely what anybody would call a spotless town. Some of the youngsters who followed me along the street as I ate a few cakes out of a newspaper sack were certainly more than grateful for the share they got of them. The men about the docks appear to think an average earning of 13-16-0 extremely good—taking good days with bad. They were getting bothered by jobless men drifting onto the docks from other parts of the country where the mills are less busy.

Every night appears to bring its contacts with the drink problem—right on the main street, too, not more than a few rods from the boarding-house on a side street.

“Twenty pounds a week that roller there is a-mikin’ noow!” a well-dressed young mechanic exclaimed last night with a nudge as we passed a neat-appearing and well-built working man. “A level’-eaded chap, ’e is, that’s sure. See ’ow strite ’e’s walkin’! As sober as you or me! On twenty pounds a week! Well, if thot was me, you’d see me rollin’ ’ome now in a taxi—if it wasn’t my friends a-tikin’ me—me and the load I’d be carryin’! . . . Well, of course, I learned most of me drinkin’ in the army. In the army there’s nothin’ else to do, ye see, whether ye’re ’ere, at ’ome, or abroad, but drink.”

The hags that once were women are depressing enough—you come upon them in the back streets, perhaps, just as they are getting up from the gutter where some drunken would-be lover has knocked them, shouting dreadful and obscene sex profanities after their abusers or at the calm and capable “bobbies” who are trying to urge them home in quietness and decency. So, also, are the men who show plainly enough that their better and soberer days are now in a far-distant past. But easily the worst of all for what they have to say about the future are the well-dressed and dapper young men with their white collars or clean, neat mufflers as they stagger by and call out their indelicate



flippancies to the still younger girls who blush and giggle as they parade up and down past the lighted windows in their very conscious efforts to attract attention of this beau or that, sober, if possible, but, at any rate, a beau.

It isn't as bad as it will be Saturday night or Sunday—or Friday—and, except on those nights, the vomitings seem fairly well restrained. But the policeman says that the week has been showing more drunkenness each night as it progresses, owing to the fact that last week was mainly a holiday, with, therefore, a little time required before the usual gait can be attained!

"Oh, aye! I 'as a family oop Newcastle wye," a very muddled Northerner answered last night as we found ourselves together admiring a fine piece of Scotch woollens labelled, "Only ninety shillings the suit!" "No, there's no job fer a mon 'ere—not as I knows of. Oonless yer could get a berth on a boat, mebbe. Awnd fer thot a mon moost, o' course, be a British citizen awnd 'ave 'is pipers (papers) right 'andy like. Awnd 'ere I am wi' me own bloody pipers lost, too, since I came to this —— town!"

"That's fair 'ard luck. Then you and me is a long way down the drain—besides one of us bein' well 'up the pole' (drunk)," was the best that I could do for him.

"Well, I'm bloo-ody glad thot the Poles is gettin' on a bit, onywyas!" was his own brilliant and cosmopolitan repartee as he lurched out into the street there to miss a motor by the hair's breadth of the proverbial drunken man's luck.

On the whole, the wisest way of trying to get a more inspirational view of things is to go up-stairs to bed, now that, as usual, I've stayed up as long as custom seems to permit. Perhaps if I don't light my candle I can forget the color of those sheets. With all the successful executions I've been staging these last few mornings, prospects ought to be fairly good for a restful night.



Middlesbrough,  
Friday Evening, August 27th.

Everybody here, apparently, is willing to admit that the London steel people were right when they named this place as the centre of Britain's iron and steel industry. According to the local legend, it all started from a fellow-townsmen's toe—possibly in combination with a certain amount of temper. While hunting, this man gave his toe an unusually painful stubbing on what he had a right to resent as an unusually hard piece of rock. It is easy to imagine how, as he gritted his teeth with the pain, he first made a grab for the poor toe; then how his pain gave way, a moment later, perhaps, to indignation at his clumsy—and painful—awkwardness; how that, in turn, was perhaps assuaged by the determination to save his face, as it were, by learning if that particular piece of stone could not be shown harder and heavier than it had any normal right to be, in which case there would be more excuse for his otherwise unpardonable awkwardness! Anyhow, the story goes that he took the offending rock to a man for assaying and in that way discovered that the stuff was really not stone at all but iron! Anybody that has ever shovelled the stuff knows how heavy it is! One of the most successful of all the local companies now bears the hunter's name as its founder and successful head. The forty-three blast-furnaces which nightly light the district's skies and throw their glare upon the city's streets are all so many brilliant monuments to his good protestant toe and questioning disposition if not his temper. Doubtless the owner of these properties of body and mind also had considerable to do with the great improvement on the Tees River by means of the use of the slag, for straightening its channel down to the near-by sea. It was on the shores of that sea, by the way, that the first ore-mining is said to have been done—by men going about with no other mining tools than two hands and an open bag!

This same district also saw the installation of the world's

first steam-railway system. It was the foresight of two Quakers renowned for their level-headed shrewdness—Edward and Joseph Pease, by name—that helped the inventor, George Stephenson, to establish the country's first rail service. For many years the original engine ran between the near-by towns of Stockton and Darlington. "Hi've seed men thot was drivers themselves on the old hengine, mind ye," an old fellow in one of the pubs assured me, while one of his ancient mates added with a nod that in the old days they used to start the fire with the help of a sun-glass. In that case, it is to be hoped that under such cloudy skies the train did not have to depend exclusively on that for the making of its schedule.

The chief difficulty with which the district has to contend is that both the quantity and the quality of the local ore are running out.

"Unfortunately local or 'Cleveland' iron stone is very low-grade stuff—about 33 per cent—when we do get it. When the price of steel products goes down, we'll hardly be able to bother with it and the costliness of the labor of getting it, in spite of its nearness. . . . The minimum wage gives the miners here a minimum of seventeen shillings for a seven-hour day."

The same group of executives in one of the large companies where I established contact went on from this statement to a very frank discussion of the local labor situation:

"Labor has probably been somewhat spoiled by having almost every one of its demands complied with for the sake of winning the war. Some of the leaders see now the necessity for accepting some of the setbacks that business in general expects to have to accept—lower prices, lessened profits, and all that. But for the rank and file, the only way will probably be the way of losing this or that fight for higher or even the same wages as before. That's quite likely to be the result of the miners' strike now on the way.

"In our opinion a union—and a whole trade, or craft, or

company, or industry, for that matter—will suffer in the long run if its policies are not worked out to produce long-run fairness and to show long-run consideration. For instance, take the engineers and the more skilled mechanics. During the war they decided that they must not be asked to go to fight because they were too much needed at home. That was their own decision, you understand. Well, at the same time, we had to work out machines for getting the munitions faster than they were willing to give them to us—automatic and what you call fool-proof machines that a general laborer could get big results from—and big pay, too. Sometimes, of course, this general laborer could run several machines. Then the engineer fellows tried to stop that by insisting on ‘One machine, one man!’ They, of course, tried all the harder when they saw unskilled men who had never gone through any period of apprenticeship getting more on payment by results than they were getting working on time, after they had resisted piece-work, you see. But most of us felt that it was because of their own overselfish short-sightedness. In general, you’ll find that those unions have lost standing not only with the masters (owners) but also with the workers in general.

“The unions as a general thing want to be quite fairly reasonable if treated with understanding; it is the management’s fault where it loses control of its own shop to the unions. Of course, giving a man the sack is a very serious thing—especially if he has worked up to be, say, a first or second hand on the smelters. If he has to leave here then he has to start at the bottom—at or near general labor—in the other shop, for none of those there should be set aside in order to give him a place up the line. That being so, perhaps it’s not so bad, you know, for the union to watch that nobody gets the sack unjustly. Where we have found a man loafing and have sacked him, we have often been able to insist upon his crowd’s showing more energy before

we will consent to reinstate him. In one case where the men asked that 300 pieces should constitute a full day's work, we officers ourselves went out and showed that 1,000 was easy. The men's representative laughed, and the next day his men—just to show what poor workers we officer chaps were—did 5,000! We were perfectly glad to agree on 1,000, however.

"Yes, if a man has got drunk, has stolen, or committed some other crime before the law, we have to be rather quick, you know, to show our displeasure by discharging him. If we wait until after the court has sentenced him, the union is likely to insist that he has been punished twice, just as in the case of the railway men who stole the pianos.

"The claim of the Electrical Trades Union that a worker should retain his union membership when he becomes a foreman is a bit more complicated than it looks. You see, if he gave up his membership and then happened to lose his job he would probably have to start at general labor before he could get another job. At least he would have to compete with other men who had the same experience on their cards as he and then had union cards in addition. And for the most part, in steel when we need men we ask the union officer to supply them. Generally they are used more by the iron and steel employers than the government's labor exchanges. Besides this trouble with the job, therefore, the worker-foreman who left his union would also lose the union's old-age annuity benefits—after paying into them, perhaps for thirty years. So we generally have them continue here in the union but without attending meetings—which the men, as well as we, find quite all right."

After talking during the last day or two with a number of other employers, the reasonableness of their view-point seems typical of the whole district, at least so far as iron and steel are concerned. All seem to agree that the old twelve-hour day was too long—also that the short day has



been in operation for too short a time to show how it can increase output, the higher positions which require ordinarily a number of years of training now being "diluted" with workers who had to be moved up the line rapidly in order to fill the additional third shift. At one big establishment a dispute is now on with the rollers. It seems that a new set of rolls has just been put into operation—much bigger and more modern than anything in the district. In view of its huge cost as an extremely intricate and sensitive piece of machinery, the management claims that responsibility for its operation and up-keep must be given to a highly trained mechanic or fitter. The union insists that, being a pair of rolls, it must inevitably be under the charge of a roller.

"And there you are! But considering that it is our machine and represents our capital, we shall insist that it is for us and not our workers to say. That is a quite reasonable claim, is it not?"

The splendid thing is that no one of these officials, whether they are regular superintendents or in one or two cases labor managers, appears to fear that between them and the shop committees which comprise the union representatives there is any great probability that any issue will be settled wrongly for either side. Such confidence is, of course, the very beginning of justice and fair dealing because it cuts the ground from under the feet of fear—feet which can always be counted upon to run in the direction of the fightings and bickerings and meannesses called out whenever self-preservation is apparently threatened. Apparently, too, this confidence is the splendid flower of thirty years or more of friendly relations between the managers and the men.

This same impression of remarkably reasonable and peaceful relations on what long has been a very hectic sector of the industrial front in America is born out of my chat this morning with one of the heads of the blast-furnace-



men—a big, heavy-mustached possessor of a body made strong and husky and a head made level, if not highly tutored, by twenty years of hard work around the cast-house and the pig-bed.

“Ever since 1897 we ’ave ’ad the three shifts on the furnaces; the first in the land was ’ere, too. Awful it was before then! Awful! We used to fall asleep right there on the job—over our food, perhaps. Often. Many times, too, I’ve seen me cryin’ with the blood on my ’ands—and me that doon in.”

He is a Socialist but does not seem to be “working at it,” possessing as he does a great respect for all the leaders among the local manufacturers and feeling that his group of workers have more than maintained themselves in wages and hours and general prestige in comparison with the other workers of the country. His union enrolls most of the country’s blast-furnacemen but is apparently one of the comparatively few remaining unaffiliated with the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation. “They’re too autocratic. My men can give me the sack on three months’ notice. The ’eads of the confederation we think too sure of their jobs—too independent and too fond o’ London.”

“Besides the three shifts—and we believe that has increased output by 25 per cent—the other big thing is good wages—our men have increased 250 per cent over pre-war—and the sliding scale for payment by results. By that, when the cost of living goes up, the selling price of our standard Cleveland iron stone generally goes up with it. That takes up our tonnage wage rates automatically, as you might say. Then we have good arrangements for settling all disputes. Our union representative, for one thing, must be a worker there at the job—right at the furnace, one of the men—not what you call a walking delegate. The men at the plant elect him. He goes first to the manager after the foreman has been unable to fix something that’s gone wrong. After

that the manager is asked to see a deputation, perhaps from the local council made up of the delegates from all the local shops. After that it's taken up by two chosen from the council and two from the managers. Then it goes up for arbitration by a national group. But it seldom gets half that way, now that we've come better to understand each other."

As one might judge after going about in the blasts with their uncovered cast beds, he seemed to have thought little about conditions of work outside the shorter hours—probably because the pressure from the men has kept him too busy on wages and such matters.

"No, we're not for the men bathin' at the plant, though they do often come 'ome wet through from workin' in the 'eat an' the rain. Men don't take proper changes of clothes for the bathin'—and they use too much 'ot water. A friend an' pal o' mine died that way. No, we're not for that."

"Prohibition? No, we're not for that, either! You see, all 'ot workers—furnacemen and smelters—they must have their beer, you know. Still, I will say, there's too many that's big earners but drink it all up. I regret to say, also, that in some classes we started 'ere among the men, in chemistry and iron-makin', you know, the Irish and the Scotchmen stuck it out and the English quit."

According to a worker in a cinder-pit the other day, one reason John Barleycorn is such an enemy of the worker is that nowadays, besides being much more expensive, "the stuff's so weak that ye 'ave ter drink twice as much of it as befoor. In the old days ye cood get drunk on a shillin'; now it costs nearer a pound! Some o' them as 'as more money than ever afoor the war fair swill it, but 'tis not so bad—the drunkenness, ye oonderstawnd—now as 'twas ten, twenty year ago, not by fair odds. It costs too much!"

Somehow or other beer or whiskey seems to get into nearly

every discussion. Of all the comments yet encountered that to-day from one of the executives is the oddest—that prohibition here is likely to lead to race suicide for the reason that any sober working man would hesitate to bring children into such bad conditions of living as many of the country's cities furnish!

The only answer to that would seem to be the thought that either those conditions be ended with better houses which men might build, with less chance for drink, or else that the number be decreased of those who are born into them to crawl about on the bent and weazened little legs that bespeak that distemper of poverty which one of the continental nations has been unkindly observant enough to call "the English disease."

Well, at least, it's hopeful to see that managers and workers are immensely nearer to each other here than anywhere yet encountered, even though it might be wished that they differed somewhat more in their attitude on what appears to an outsider as such a complication in the whole problem. Evidently the industry as a whole here has not yet run into the hard times which some of the financial leaders see coming. In a new plant here is to be seen such a collection of the most modern and up-to-date electrical equipment of rolls and furnaces as any establishment in the world would be proud to show. And near by are workers living in a brand-new model town with pretty streets curving about attractive four-rooms-and-bath homes built to sell at 700 to 900 pounds—only \$2,800 at the pound sterling's present value. They appear well constructed, too, around a framework of angle-iron fabricated in the town's own steel plant.

Altogether this whole place gives a fellow hope. If these employers and these workers can get together as well as they have, then it ought to be possible elsewhere. Here are reasonable, fair, and forward-looking leaders both of

men and managers—and here, it certainly must be evident, are more than a few reasons for the same.

Evidently nothing of this reassuring sort has as yet been found in the coal-fields, at least nothing substantially calm and cool enough to offset the radicalism of my old buddies back there in Wales. Every day the outlook for the walk-out of the miners in the whole country grows worse; though, as might be imagined, nearly all the workers, as well as the citizens in general, dread it greatly and hope that somehow it may be avoided. According to the morning papers Swansea had begun to buy coal from America! Swansea there almost at the mouth of the great Welsh coal district—Swansea, of all places! Well, it will be worth while tomorrow over at Barnsley, the capital of the Yorkshire coal area, to see what can be learned in this absorbing—yes, I'll say this thrilling—game of trying to find the connection between men's working conditions and their active, their working convictions, between the state of their body's muscles and the coolness or the "het-up-ness" of their soul's "mentals." Barnsley is a pretty long jump from here as distances go, so here's hoping for a better than usual night's sleep.

*Later.*

Of all the luck!

Before facing those sheets up-stairs—even in the candle's light—it looked good to take a turn 'round. Outside a workmen's store or shop for selling and distributing Socialist and similar literature I happened onto two interesting-looking men, one of them a member of the local Socialist council. They are quite thoughtful fellows and were greatly interested in my coming from America; they reported all the British Socialists as setting great store by Jack London, of whose writings the shop sold large quantities. They seem to think it hopeless to try to change the present order of affairs gradually by any attempt to make any diagnosis



of the causes of the world's present unhappiness—"There's 17,000 tons of soot and cinders falling into this town every year. Now what can a man do with that!" But, nevertheless, after we had got each other's confidence, one of them in the hearing of his pal told his troubles—and my ears were delighted as he told them, too.

"Well, I'm fair puzzled over it all. 'Ere I work the 'ole of a bloody year. Awnd what do I get to show for it? Nothin'! All the time tryin' to get these bloody steel men into the radical organizations for givin' ourselves a fair start alongside of the wonderful things they've done—the workin' men, ye understawnd—in Russia. But not a look do these steel fellows give me, not one. I'm fair like to lose me job unless I can get some of them in for my report."

With the nods, and for the most part the general assent, of his pal, who has grown up in Middlesbrough, it was agreed between us that "there's a reason" for such community view-points, and that in this particular case these reasons were very close to such as the following, to wit:

First, the steadiness of the Middlesbrough steel jobs; second, the absence of "tiredness and temper" favored by the shortness of these same jobs on the three-shift system and the comparative comfort of the town's four and six room houses, built frequently with bath, thirty instead of a hundred and thirty years old, as in some cases on the Clyde bank; thirdly, the poor chance for suspicion and distrust which grows up where worker and "mawster" are on such good terms as in Middlesbrough; and, fourthly and finally, the self-respect which grows up out of such regularity, such good, decent surroundings, and such good confidence and sharing, especially when these are aided by good wages which, by means of the sliding scale, automatically keep pace—and more than pace—with the cost of living.

As a parting shot they asked how it comes about that there are so many Socialists—and such active ones—"over



Lancashire way" where they have such "good wages, good gaffers, and all." Luckily I could alibi myself out of answering the question because I hadn't visited that part of the country and if they'd give me a chance I'd sure enough find that "reason there, too—bad livin' conditions, irregular work, or somethin'."

No, I'm going stronger than ever on human nature and on the general proposition that "Men are square!"

And that, too, in spite of the fact that the evening paper says that "fifty thousand war widows have been found by the government to be living with unmarried men in order not to lose the pension of 20/ given widows under 40, the 26/8 given to those over 36, etc., etc."

At least this can be said: that there is no great underlying difference within human nature itself in the different countries. Such a difference surely could not exist, and still favor the amazing way a man hears the same sentimental announcement every time a crowd of boys and girls go singing by whether here or back in Swansea or the mine towns of Wales or farther back in those other mine camps of Pennsylvania, to the effect that "Wedding-bells will ring so mer-ri-ly," etc.

I wonder if the children of the unmarried war widows will grow up to join these same groups when they change as regularly as they seem to, to "That old-fashion'd mother of mi-ne!"

## CHAPTER VI

### MIDST THE MINERS AND MACHINISTS OF THE MILD MIDLANDS

Barnsley, Yorkshire,  
Sunday night,  
August 29, 1920.

BRITISH industry can certainly give us Americans some pointers on the week-end holiday. Of course, we are gradually getting the idea but certainly very few of our steel workers, for instance, would have the courage to insist upon closing down the open-hearth furnaces from the last tapping Friday night until a fresh charge Sunday evening, as appears practically universal here. One of the steel men's leaders here has said, too, that few changes would be opposed more bitterly than any effort to eliminate this week-end lay-off. About 2,000,000 workers are also said to have agreements giving holidays of three to fourteen days with pay, according to length of service.

Yesterday afternoon it was an exhilarating sight to see here a crowd of about 10,000 miners turn out from all the country round to see a football game between a local team of miners and a team of Sheffield steel men. A good game it was, too, as anybody with half an eye would testify. A well-dressed and altogether prosperous-looking crowd they were. Such a sea of neat caps and clean, fresh neck muffers they made—and such quick and unerring judges, too, of good foot work or head work in the drooling of the ball or the guarding of the goal. Indeed, for head work the ball sometimes went the length of the field by being butted skilfully from one man's head to another's!

In an open field on the way to the game, a half-dozen men and boys were taking chances on their pigeons. One

with his watch in hand would wait very intently for the right second as his friend, the starter, held the bird in his right hand far back and ready for tossing high in the air. At his "Go!" the bird would be thrown perhaps thirty feet, there to get its wing, and, after a circle or two, dart off like a flash for the home cote in another part of the town, dodging the wires and spires and chimneys in a splendid effort to cover the distance. Evidently the starting times had been agreed upon in advance, so that the instant of arrival would be noted and the bird's performance duly recorded with a view to a successful wager when some more important event was arranged. Apart from the amount of money won or lost, it looks like an enjoyable sport—and one in which the necessary investment can hardly be so very high. For one thing, at least, it can be enjoyed with less wear and tear upon the ears than the whippet racing.

Perhaps it is partly because the short stay here and the necessity of getting into touch with both the mine owners and the mine workers has required the return to the white sheets and other comforts of a fairly good hotel—at any rate, it is easy to feel a long distance away from Middlesbrough and the other busy cities of industrial England. It is hard to imagine a more peaceful and comfortable scene than that enjoyed yesterday when a table acquaintance and I lolled on the grass of the town park and looked across the countryside. Beautiful meadows with their thick carpets of green dotted with lazy cattle or picnicking families or strolling lovers, great patterns outlined by the pleasant hedges around squares of yellow grain, smoke curling up indolently from prosperous though simple cottages, church spires or colliery "tips" rising above the clumps of trees—all make it look like a very happy combination of worthy work and pleasurable living, made possible, evidently, by means of a thorough domestication and humanization of the local industry, underground though that is. Almost

anybody could imagine himself lying there in the grass and coming into sufficient exaltation of spirit—if not into sufficient energy of muscle—for the finding of the paper and the guiding of the lazy pencil for expressing some such sentiment as Goldsmith's:

“How pleasant then in shades like these  
To crown a youth of labor with an age of ease!”

But it became very shortly evident that nature and human nature have to co-operate in order to do the whole job of making people happy. My new-found acquaintance was moved by the beauty of the scene to reveal his ideas about his job and his fellow workers on it.

“No, I can hardly say that my education has done much for me, you know, in my present responsibilities as the manager of my father's business. Like every other boy born in my class, I spent the years between twelve and fourteen at a public school—I suppose you Americans would call it anything but a public school, because it is the sort of school attended only by the sons of the upper classes—like the chaps you read about, you know, at Harrow and Eton—schools where the Iron Duke said the battle of Waterloo was won, and all that sort of thing. Well, at these public schools the studying is mostly Latin and such things—very classical and all that. The chap who is remembered longest at such places is the one who is best in some line of athletics— ‘Oh, yes, I recall him! Made a jolly good record in cricket and at the sculls, didn't he? Yes, quite so, fine chap, I remember!’ Of course, it does give a man a fine lot of acquaintances with the others of the same set about the country, and I dare say that's worth while.

“But now, of course, my job is to get on, not with that set but with our workers, isn't it? Well, as a matter of fact, I have quite such a problem on just now. Many of the men in our paper factory have been with us as much as

fifty years and we've always got on with them quite all right. But during the war the younger ones organized them all into a strong body for increasing and increasing—always increasing—their weekly pay. And now it's simply impossible to pay them what they ask for the small amount of work they give, you know—and still make any profit out of the business. So I've been taking a little vacation to think out a plan and here it is, if you would care to know it. I shall accept an offer from one of our competitors to take over the whole business and so close up the place pending final negotiations. After the men have spent a few weeks wondering whether they stand a chance of being continued at their places, I shall say to the oldest and most thoughtful of them that if I can have their co-operation—and their services at a reduced rate, you understand?—perhaps I can somehow or other wangle it to get things going again for the old crowd, especially the oldest of them—the oldest and most reasonable, you see. Of course, this sale I speak of will only be bogus, though I shall take pains, you may be sure, to give every evidence to convince them that it is a quite bona-fide affair and in every way quite all right, you know."

As he set forth his plan the words of a very thoughtful Socialist encountered there on the smelting stage last week in Middlesbrough came back to me:

"Yes, the worker is much to blame. He often goes too far in his demands and too often he refuses to raise his standard of living and his personal equipment and capacity—too often he spends his additional earnings on drink instead of furniture. (Personally I don't drink or smoke.) But with all that, I think we must have a new system of society simply for this one reason: *Management and Capital just can't be trusted*. With the lure of profits, you understand, *it finds it too easy to be dishonest*—just personally dishonest with the worker and with society in general."



It is very unpleasant to have my "public-school" acquaintance give such good support to my smelting-stage friend. The only reply appears to be that there must always be motive, whether financial or otherwise, in order to get individual response and energy, and that in all times and under any system, men will be tempted to "short-circuit" their way to the overquick and unrighteous and unjust reward—with always the need, accordingly, at all times and under any system, of the restraint which comes from the moral soundness that is content to rest its case on those "mills which grind right slowly yet exceeding sure." A clipping of a day or two ago, by the way, tells of the disconsolate stone-breaker by one of these wonderful roads replying to the minister's greeting with: "Ugh, they stones be as bad as the Ten Commandments. Ye can keep on breakin' 'em but ye can't get rid of 'em."

Of course, it is just such ruses that enormously complicate the whole matter for the employer who would deal justly. In many cases his men have been trained by exactly such dishonest practices into the settled conviction that honesty for the employer is as impossible as the eye of the needle for the rich. The strange thing is that the employer who is entirely persuaded of his own honesty fails too often to understand how any of his employees can be so hard-hearted and ungrateful as to question his motives. At the same time, if he himself runs into a small number of disagreeable experiences with his workers, he is quite as quick to come to certain definite and adamant convictions with regard to *all* employees everywhere as is the worker after a few unpleasant experiences with this or that employer. In either case, that conviction, built though it ordinarily is on a highly illogical, because highly emotional, foundation constitutes a veritable Chinese wall for preventing both groups from having a fair go at each other and each other's confidence.

Yesterday's travelling, by the way, demonstrated in a new manner how this difficulty of getting on with each other is connected with the desire of every one of us to keep tight hold, throughout every waking moment of the day, of the feeling that we are holding our own and getting a certain amount of respect and recognition from the other fellow. After I had been told for the fourth or fifth time to change cars in order to make the trip here, I came close to a little "run-in" with one of the station guards. He appeared to me at the time extremely officious. Now that I've cooled off, it looks as though the chief trouble was that a stranger is extremely likely to feel touchy and easily aggrieved in a strange land. In the nature of the case his ignorance leads him to a sense of helplessness if not of actual shame for his childish ignorance in finding his way through a new country. The result in lost "face" is much the same as if he had lost his self-confidence and so increased his temper and touchiness by reason of fatigue instead of by inexperience—with the chances good for a few explosions of irritability which affect international attitudes and relationships instead of the more usual jars within the circle of the factory or the family.

At a number of stations men and boys, just out from the collieries for the Saturday-afternoon holiday, got on with their grimy clothes and black faces for riding up to their homes in the next town or so. Several of the boys are very sore that the London papers are making so much fuss about their votes, as though they were certain to favor a strike in order to get a bit of excitement even though that means pushing the country toward the brink of disaster. Both their own thirst for the vacation which the strike might give and also the reported carelessness of the union officials in giving out and collecting the votes are being grossly exaggerated, they are certain, by the daily press.

"'Tis for our fawthers to do the decidin'," said one of the

blackest of them. "So I rolled mine up. 'Twon't be counted one way or another."

The same type of boy—many of them scarcely turned fourteen and inclined, apparently, to be small for their years—was in the crowd last night at what seemed a combination of carnival, fair, and market. With their girl friends, still wearing their hair down their backs, they made part of the great crowds that patronized the swing or the merry-go-round with its labored but melodious grinding of the popular tunes, or else stood up to the counters with the flaring torches to eat with the help of fingers and much vinegar from the great piles of cold pickled tripe, pigs' knuckles and toes, or cows' heels. The girls were young—surprisingly young—and especially when the swings rose highest or the merry-go-round went merriest, were sufficiently prodigal and friendly with their young waists and arms. In a number of cases, it must be said with regret, the boys were staggering, particularly at ten after the pubs were closed and the lights began to dim and the crowds, with their wooden-soled mine shoes and many a cheery "Good neet!" (good night) began to thin out—leaving much depleted the piles of cookies, candies, vegetables, shoes, stockings, etc., etc.

While the crowd was at its height a sightseer was bound to follow in the direction of a street where, among a number of pubs, the sign of "Musical Tavern" supported the impression of the ears that "a good time was being had by one and all." It certainly is a popular place, in spite of the fact that the Muse suffers from much the same troubles that afflict the speechmaker on Bath Street in Glasgow.

Over by the piano a perfectly sober and spotlessly neck-muffled miner with a shining face—except for that thin, telltale ring of unreachable grime close to the inmost circle of his eyes—waits as the woman accompanist gives the

chord and the voice of a friend calls: "Ple-a-se, gentlemen, ple-a-se!"

"I of-ten think of Mo-ther."

So far so good. The miner evidently has a good voice and the prospect looks good that most of his audience will soon be weeping, especially those already helped farthest on toward the stage of tears by the brimming glasses set down hurriedly before them by the overworked and almost breathless, sweet-faced—also pink shirt-waisted and red-beribboned—young barmaid. But by this time the interest of one whose sentiment has already got the better of him is on the job of helping the singer:

"Thank ye, gents, one and all!" he roars out to everybody.

It's all off! The miner has to start over again—just at the instant, unluckily, that his friend—his sober friend—implores with another: "Please! Order, gents, order!"

"I of-ten think of Mo-ther——"

"I thank ye, gents. One and all, I thank ye!" roars the drunken listener.

Whereupon friend, singer, pianist, and drunken admirer all go ahead without paying any attention to each other—and all the rest of the crowd gives itself to its glasses while the big red-faced and red-muffled fellow with the leather leggings—he was selling sheep there in the main square in the afternoon—stops the barmaid long enough to whisper some of those confidential importances of which a drunken man seems always full, and the black-haired old woman with the few big teeth and the many gums and stumps—also the crumpled-up millinery of unfortunate but still struggling respectability—laughs her pitiful and maudlin laugh till her tears are running down the back of her more sober gentleman escort against whom she leans.

After so much noise and excitement this morning was a long expanse of empty-streeted silence and serenity. To-



night it has been fairly active again after the early closing of the Sunday evening session of the pubs, with fairly numerous drunken boys and men among the crowds—also, for some reason, a surprising number of young girls with lots of hair braids on their shoulders and a good deal of boy in their eyes. A long walk took me out into the lanes by the hedges where the moon and the pleasant meadows appeared to be exercising a very potent influence upon all who had been lucky enough to plan a meeting, making it, on the whole, no place for a solitary and lonesome husband.

America seems to afford no opportunity for rendezvous quite comparable to this combination of meadow and moon, lane and hedge, darkness and limitless sky. It would be interesting to know whether this has anything to do with a certain realism in the writings of the modern school of English novelists which we Americans find unexpected.

Here's hoping that to-morrow sees some progress toward getting at least some of the local opinion on the matter of coal; it is certainly being taken by the country in general as a burning subject indeed. At any rate, getting the cars to the mines so as to permit regular operation appears to be no problem here, because, doubtless, of the distribution of the mines and the consequent shortness of the haul in a small country. A few days ago a Welsh colliery was mentioned as laying off 2,000 men on account of lack of "trucks." American papers could hardly print anything else if they were to record the same misfortune in our mines from day to day.

Monday, August 30th,  
Barnsley, Yorkshire.

It's amazing the way the day has supported exactly the impression given Saturday and Sunday by the hillside's reassuring combination of hedgerow, church spire, coal tippie, and cottage chimney. Strangely enough, the only jarring notes came from the pessimism of some of the owners. One



of these represents several generations of mine managers. He thinks that his industry has already gone over onto the basis of practical nationalization—with the chances against its ever coming back.

“I’d be jolly glad to sell all our properties to the government to-morrow. Then I’d ‘hop it’ off to the Argentine or some place where governments give men a freer and happier hand.”

Another—more in the nature of a self-made man—is equally certain that there is no way out of the country’s coal troubles except to go through a lot of panicky times which can be counted on finally to result in lower wages and a more humble worker—much the same thing that is being said, doubtless, at this same moment, by many of those American employers who are called “hard boiled.”

Still another of much the same group believes that most of the fault lies upon the employer’s side, even though that is the side with which he is actively connected.

“Most of the bickerings back and forth are for political purposes—whether by labor or capital. In it all the government simply watches its chance to turn every possible eventuality into profit and prestige for itself. That is its entire policy—that and raising the prices of coal and everything else. For instance, take this telephone. It’s awful! One ‘phone and one branch cost fifty pounds the year. Two regular ‘phones cost one hundred pounds—here in this small place! How can progressive industry stand such strains as that?”

All of these seem to agree that the laboring man all but resists opportunities to put himself into a better group or to raise the standard of his living. One man told of a miner who found himself having to pay what he considered very large taxes because his earnings—for the first time in his life—were running pretty well over fifty pounds a quarter. As a result he definitely decided to earn less. So some

weeks now he works only three days. "You see, he's not used to paying taxes and feels that it is just plain robbery. The only way to stop it is to earn less!"

"The Urban Council here pays the fare of boys back and forth from the neighboring towns for taking certain technical courses in the night schools here. The council has been anxious to get as many boys to make use of this advantage as possible. But after all we've done the boys taking it in the district number only nine!"

The surprise of the day was to get such good and hopeful words from the workers. "The best employers in the 'ole of merry England, we got right 'ere in the district," was the way an old and retired employee put it as he nursed a rheumatic leg in the kitchen where I found him. The house certainly looks thrifty and comfortable with its nice little pantry garden in the back and an "allotment," or war garden plot, as we would call it, across the alley in the rear.

"Yes, me father offered me more education and, like the foolish one I was, I said no. Well, ye see, the crowd—that is all me boys and pals here in the place—was going regular underground when they was twelve. Of course, we all begun at trappin'—that's mindin' the mine doors, y' understand? A twelvepence it was we got, the day of twelve hours. Never did we see the light until Sunday—that early we 'ad to be in and that late out, the six days of the week. I'll never forget me first pay. They gave me two shillin'. Every step o' the way 'ome I ran to show it to me mother! Of course, in them days, a pound of sugar you could get for three ha'pence and for meat, well, for a prime and special cut, y' understand, 'twould be sixpence the pound. Of course, too, the seams 'ere are good—three feet five and four feet six. . . .

"Since twenty years never a drop 'as passed me lips. Before that 'twas twenty or thirty shillin' the week that floated down me throat in the beer an' all. 'Tis likely for

that that I don't 'ave ter work now—with eleven children to carry on fer me, though for ten year me wife would be no good—the rheumatism 'as 'er worse 'n me."

Among the most thoughtful minded women seen in England I think I would place the wife of a union official whose view-point was, perhaps, in a way, more representative of the district's workers than if her husband had been speaking. She was in school until she was eighteen and has both a lively and an intelligent interest in everything going on in the country as well as in the district. Both her father and her husband have been or are union officials.

"No, I'd say the Bolshies are here but they have no following. The reason is that our employers have lived here all their lives and their fathers before them. Every one trusts them. And you can see the kind of houses the miners live in, with rent in the town from six and sixpence up to nine shillings for the newest, also for the several hundred soon to be built. Besides that there is free coal from the mine—eight or ten tons of it, I suppose, in the year.

"Even the boys here are voting against this strike, partly because they think they're getting along pretty well and partly because the Miners' Federation let them down last year when this district thought it had a grievance and went out by itself. My husband gives out the ballots most carefully, I assure you. The results are carefully guarded in every way. How it is in other districts of the country, I don't know. . . . The government seems to me just stupid. My cousin is trying to go out to join her brothers and sisters in the colonies. With all the overplus of workers and especially of women here, you'd think the government would help, but only last week she almost decided to give it up—that troublesome they were at the Emigration Office and all."

Unfortunately Vice-President Smith of the Miners' Federation is not at his home here. One of his assistants,

however, is apparently to be counted on for straight thinking—and kindly.

“It’s the distrust on both sides, so we all believe, that makes any further efforts to work out the present situation on any modification of the present system impossible. Masters and men have come to such a point of suspicion and misunderstanding that the mining industry is at a dead standstill. The only way out is nationalization—an entirely new stand all the way ’round. It’s the only way to save the industry. Perhaps nationalized mines have not succeeded very well in other countries where they have been tried, but this will be the first time that nationalization will come as a direct result of the workers in the industry wanting it themselves. That will make a great difference. For one thing that will allow the better technical equipment which the mines must have if the men are to keep up production. Production per man has been decreasing as the operators claim, but you see that’s because most of our British mines are old and the equipment and engineering have got farther and farther out of date. It’s not strange, either, that the owners hesitate to spend the necessary millions for improving them, with the threat of nationalization over their heads. And, you know, we miners ourselves don’t agree as to whether the owners should be paid well or even at all for their properties.

“The Joint Council plan proposed by the government—you know, where owners and miners would have representation on a mine committee and then on district and national committees and councils—has not worked well in experience. Partly because, I’m bound to say, the operator is amazingly short-sighted in so many cases. One committee here in the district, for instance, assessed fines on all the absentees—all the men who stayed away from work. The result was to lessen it to a point quite amazing. But one day the fine was assessed on the company for some of the



officials. My word!—what did they do but refuse to pay it! A fine, mind you, of ten shillings! Of course, that broke up the whole thing. I dare say the company lost hundreds and hundreds of pounds from the absences that began the next morning after the plan—and with it the committee—smashed.

“A higher standard of living for our miners—that is the job to which the whole country and especially the union officials should give themselves. Always it is higher wages—higher wages: that is the men’s demand. But unless the workers themselves get to living better, either production falls because of the lessened amount of work or else the men give themselves to more gambling and drinking. Of course, the men themselves must want this higher standard of living or all the efforts of their leaders or their fellows are in vain. Just how that is to be accomplished it is hard to say. But I do know that the leaders must resist somehow the pressure always brought on them for higher wages without respect to larger production or to the enjoyment of better and wider living.”

This last seems to me very much the crux of the whole situation. Certainly, the district proves the influence of such a higher standard of living upon the men’s value both as workers and as citizens. That, in turn, has much to do, doubtless, with the feeling of the local district leaders, noted as they are throughout the country for their reasonableness. It is impossible to believe that such testimonies as to-day’s could have been encountered among workers in, for instance, the Scotch coal area. There, in fact, right in the country where Robert Smillie was born and raised, 28,000 families out of a total of 35,000 are said still to be living in one-room houses. In that case, it is quite conceivable that “Bob” grew up in conditions which made it extremely easy to set fire to the tinder of his boyish purposes and idealisms by the stories that might easily have



been told him by his father and grandfather. Such stories would doubtless have reflected such conditions as are described in a book given me by one of the Welsh mine owners and operators as representing a fair and, on the whole, conservative statement of the British coal problem.\* As there related, a parliamentary commission of long ago discovered that in 1842 the mines were quite innocent of anything like the ventilation the mines know to-day. The men were usually, therefore, entirely naked, oftentimes lying for the long twelve and fourteen hour day on their sides, getting down the coal out of an eighteen-inch seam! When women were not employed the business of dragging the tubs of coal from the workers out to the shaft was often done by girls of nine or ten and eleven, wearing nothing but a shirt and dragging the "coals" by means of a heavy chain which ran from the iron belt around their waists out between their legs as they crawled on hands and knees through passageways of only twenty or thirty inches' height!†

Some of the children were found by the commission to be working ankle-deep in water or crawling through pools. Once a little girl of seven years of age, who was supposed to be watching an air gate upon the proper working of which the safety of all in the mine might have depended, was found asleep, her lamp having gone out and the rats having eaten her meal of bread and cheese.

In addition there seems to have been quite general in certain areas the practice of apprenticing—by which paupers or orphans were put completely in the power of the "butty"—doubtless the original "buddy"—who was a contractor

\* "The British Coal Industry," by Gilbert Stone. E. P. Dutton & Co., New York. J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., London and Toronto.

† "Thus Mary Barnett, aged 14: 'I work always without stockings, or shoes, or trousers; I wear nothing but my shirt; I have to go up to the headings (*i. e.*, coal-face) with the men; they are all naked there; I am got well used to that, and don't care much about it; I was afraid at first and did not like it.' " (Pp. 23 and 24.)

for the owner and, as such, was in practical control of the working force. Between eight and nine years these boys were sent on trial from the workhouses or poor-farms and, if satisfactory, were bound as apprentices for twelve years—in spite of the fact that there is little in the coal-mines to learn requiring more than a few months of practice and experience. Naturally the treatment which these boys received at the hands of some of their “butties” makes most unpleasant reading. They were given no wages of any kind and were simply kept in clothes and food by their masters, besides being given the most difficult and dangerous of tasks.

It is easy to believe that part of Britain's troubles at this moment are the heritage of such a black and dreadful history. What is most important to observe, however, is that this history evidently “carries on” to-day for the most part, only where the blackness itself still continues in the shape of bad living conditions or of other unhappinesses years and years after the joint efforts of Parliament, employers, and unionized employees have succeeded in putting an end to such miseries in the working conditions underground and in denying such labor to women and children. Doubtless the mines in this district were, in the old days, quite as bad as in Scotland, yet it is Scotland's one-room houses of to-day that have given the movement much of its fervor in the person of the crusader, rather than the usual type of local leader, Bob Smillie. J. H. Thomas is certainly right in feeling that the shortage of houses in the country generally is a contributing factor to “immorality, vice, Bolshevism, and the spread of social unrest.”

More and more the criticism of the papers and also of the government officials is directing itself against the decision by the miners that such-and-such a price must be charged by the government and such-and-such limits must be set upon the government's profits, even though these are

in lieu of the ordinary taxes paid by the other individually controlled industries. It seems highly questionable that the miners can stand out for the right of the workers in any industry to determine what taxes that industry will pay as well as what prices and wages it will establish. Certainly the whole country seems pretty generally backing the government on its insistence that at least the matter of taxation is something which the government itself must be free to determine.

It's a shame not to have time to become a worker here and get the feel of the underground—and the extraordinary confidence and heart-to-heart conversation favored by the close contact of the filling of the tram there at the face. But, with the way the conversations with the workers on the streets and in the pubs have supported the words of the leaders and the others, it seems better to start for the steel mills of Sheffield.

It would be enjoyable also to "stick around" longer if only to get closer to the Yorkshire dialect, which must be behind the "good neet!" (good night) or "gimme a leet" (light) so frequently heard on the streets. One householder tells of the perplexity produced in the family by a Yorkshire maid who came to ask: "Maunie mak shet?" After some moments, and the calling in of an older inhabitant, it was discovered that she was asking: "Shall I make shut?" that is, close the doors and windows for the night.

The local paper adds the country's usual jab at government service by telling of the man who boasted of "following public work" and being asked if he ever overtook it.

Sheffield,  
Thursday, September 2nd.

"Full up!" was certainly the word here a night or two ago when the train got in from Barnsley at what looked like a sufficiently early hour for finding a bed, but wasn't. The

daily need of making the circuit of the gates in search of a job, and the clothes that go with that necessity, made impossible any of the first or second class hotels. The crowded condition of the town just about made everything else equally closed. In spite of the help of numerous "bobbies," several advertisements, a lot of carfare, and an immense amount of leg work, all efforts brought no words more consoling than the ubiquitous "Full up! Not a bed in the 'ouse!" with occasionally an additional "Sorry." Finally, after nearly twenty askings, it was just sheer goodness of heart that made a landlord of a commercial house, with the help of his two intelligent-faced and kindly dispositioned daughters, give me a pair of comforts on an antique lounge in a third-story hallway—a very open-faced bedroom it was as the maids passed along to their early duties. Certainly few of their guests ever made a larger return in gratitude. The question is whether I can prevail upon them to allow so tough-looking a customer to hang around a place which, though it is far from first class, is still miles above the status of a man so evidently in need of a job.

A day here, however, certainly makes it look as though the factories were just as crowded as the boarding-houses and rooming-places. "Naught doin' but muckin' abaht." That seems to be the situation of the men here out of jobs. "Awnd there's 'undreds 'ere that's bein' turned off now, too."

Over in a very slummy part of town—the weekly rent they said was "six bob and a tanner," that is, six and sixpence—the front rooms, as seen through the open door and over the well-soapstoned threshold, were crowded with a red-covered table, a fireplace with a teapot sitting near the coals, a bureau chest of drawers, sideboard,—wax, flowers under a large glass, a few chromos, not to mention the cat, with perhaps a dog also, before the fireplace. For ten shillings, they said, a fellow could get a regular house with a



bath. The factories near by represent a very old school of both construction and production. From the glimpses through grimy windows permitted to a jobless man, the dim lights, the smoke, and the flaming metal being cut or pounded into such things as knives or hammers and axe-heads, make a pretty unattractive picture. Indeed, the always depressing effects of the refusals of the job, coupled with the unattractive interiors and the cold rain or fog and mud of the district, put my state of mind away down below anything like par. Once I tried to pass a brick wall that made the side of a furnace in one of the factories, I found myself backed up against its splendid warmth taking note of its surrounding geography with the thought in my mind: "'Twill be fine to come back here if the winter finds me still out of work!" So far can a fellow's mood run the current of his thinking and planning out of its normal channel! A few minutes later it was a huge pleasure to notice that the working men were accepting my plea for a job as a man who "'ad just coom down from up Middlesbrough way."

"'E says 'e wants a general laborer's job," my friend explained to another, adding that "as a fellow worker 'ere from Middlesbrough we 'ad ought to do all we can. Still there's almost no bloo-ody chawnee. They're stoppin' them off now by 'undreds, with 'undreds more expecting to be stopped this week—with the engineers' strike an' all. 'Im as were 'ere just lawst night were sayin' thot a mon with no job to-day is only like wot most of the world will be soon enough."

As we had a glass together in the pub, I found it too late to explain that I was an American—for under the belief that I was British they had made their comment that "America, I see by the papers, is after rulin' the seas noow and will be wantin' every bloo-ody ha'penny from the war." What was worse, however, was that being thought a Britisher made impossible, without danger of disagreeable com-



plications, the asking of any questions about the general situation. So I find it best to be taken for the American I am—the American worker in hard luck.

The best of their suggestions was to try the gas-works. There, unfortunately, I found later, they had just taken on eight laborers that afternoon—at three pounds ten or twelve the week, with board for laborers costing generally twenty-five shillings. Luckily, I was able to answer that I was used to shovelling and that I thought I could stand the loading of “coal and coke all day, for, after all,” as I added, “coal is fairish-light after the iron stone I’d been used to handlin’ in America.” On the way out after my discouraging talk with the gaffer, a worker was glad to show with considerable pride how the gas is made, though he was sad to think that “more and more by machinery it is, and that means stoppin’ off more men.”

“So easy it is now to turn on a leet ’ere in the ’omes of Sheffield and give never a thought ’ow it must be made and washed and scrubbed and stored and all—never a thought where it cooms from or ’ow. Seven million cubic feet there is over there in that tank. As ye can see, something is bound to ’appen in Sheffield w’en we men ’ere stops off. . . . Wull, try to-morrer—a good place it is for ye all winter—awnd warm!”

Mighty little pleasure a couple of boys in the parcel-room at the station seemed to be getting out of their jobs, partly because of the misbehavings of the public.

“Everybody ‘grouses’ because we charge a thruppence for a package now instead of a tuppence, when everything else in the ’ole country ’as gone up 150 per cent instead of our 50 per cent. ’Tis the red tape of government that forbids us ’elpin’ people on the platforms like we used to do. The rules forbid it now, because, you see, it lessens the number of jobs. From what I can see ’ere we got a full 30 per cent more men than we need around the station. Of

course, that gives everybody easy work but it raises the taxes—and there you are!”

Even in such a disreputable pub as I loafed in last night, the conversation seems to be mainly that of men who can count upon steady work and fairish homes. Certainly the bartender felt his responsibility for making the place a sort of conversational *salon* rather than a mere place for drinking.

“W’at the bloo-ody ’ell is this Irish mayor a-starvin’ o’ ’imself for? I’d like to see ’em set grapes and such afoor me! Besides, there’s no sense to it. Carlisle, ’e goes in fer ’ard labor and then ’e gets out and talks in the streets and gets in again, but ’e doesn’t commit suicide and ’e does ’elp ’is cause.”

“I see a judge says if the plaintiff ’as the gout, then ’e’s rich enough to pay ’is rates,” says another.

“A gaffer ’as naught in a union meetin’,” avers another when the everlasting question arises as to the probability of the machinists’ strike. “Goin’ back like as not, ’e would, to tell ’is mawsters. Bloo-ody unreasonable they are, these mechanic chaps and these bloo-ody miners the sime.”

“O’ course there been no anti-rent strike doon this wye. W’y should there be? Rent is the only thing of all that ’asn’t gone up at least 100 per cent or more.”

The strike in Glasgow—and Scotland—was a pretty big affair, with a procession and trouble only narrowly averted, according to the papers. On the whole, however, Scotland appeared to feel the effort a good deal of a failure.

This going about from plant to plant—“Well, what is it?” just like in America—and from public house to public house is a big lot harder than it looks, mainly, I guess, because hard luck and hopelessness have to be my passport and stock in trade as it were—with it getting, without delay, into my very vitals. The surprising thing is the number of factories in which it is possible to enter without difficulty in the search of the gaffer—and the job he may be

able to give. To-morrow the route must lie farther out of the city where the newer and better, also bigger, plants are said to be. Meanwhile the most interesting person in Sheffield to date is the blind newspaper man who stands upon a near-by corner.

"In one way these poor fellows that have been blinded by the war or perhaps on their jobs, you know, are worse off than I am. Their lives, you see, have been blasted by knowing what they're missing now. I don't. You tell me about a blue sky. That means nothing to me—nor does a yard or a mile. Still I am getting about by myself—though I will say that the worst experience I ever had was that first month or two when I started to get about alone. Never will I forget it, I assure you.

"Of course, my two children have good eyes. Why? Why, because we gave them good care and didn't show them to the neighbors. Ah, yes, 'tis that that makes the trouble. You see, here the first thing done with a new baby is to take it out around to the neighbors—yes, even on the coldest of nights. Believe it or no, but I've seen it many and many times. You see, it's a great event and they think it is honoring the poor young chap—even though it may be ruining his eyes, just as it did mine.

"Yes, I tried handing my customer the paper with my fingers while he dropped the pennies into my palm, but expensive experience has taught me that every coin must pass the inspection of my fingers—not my hand—before I can make sure of letting go the paper. I'm sorry. Still, stealing a paper from a blind man's not as mean as during the war raids. You know, it sometimes happened in London that the very ones who were taken in off the streets from the bombs and all to the shelter of a roof or a cellar for the night turned around and stole their papers from their hosts—that is, the records that gave them their war allowances and so on.

"During the war, of course, I could not return any unsold papers; I can now. But in those days if your supply gave out before those who worked late came along, then they'd buy elsewhere and you lost their patronage, didn't you? Yes. Then if you had too many the next day you lost your money. So you lost either way, and there you are!]

"No, I'm against labor running the government—you see, they don't read and think enough. I find they buy mostly the *Herald*—and not for its labor news but for its sporting news. Still I don't like the coalition government either. I'm against arbitration, too, because it never settles anything—it only compromises, and all matters are either right or wrong—not half right or half wrong. That's why I'm against the unions, too. Mainly they're too selfish. We should all find our best good by helping the other fellow. 'Twon't hurt us, will it, if we help him? No. And, of course, the same should be between nations as between us single individuals, shouldn't it?

"Well, I hope some day to get some education in music. You see, I can always tell what key people talk in—or play or sing. I seem to have, somehow, absolute pitch. I only wish that a musical college might give me a chance. Well, good morning, and please look me up again, won't you? Yes."

If you don't keep looking at his ball-less sockets, you have to make an effort to figure that he is losing very much out of life, considering the range of his thinking and the wholesomeness of his feeling. The question is, perhaps, whether he really is missing anything after all. Certainly, at least, he has a very great and apparently a very considerate clientele. I can imagine they all enjoy both the tone of his voice and the sincerity of the greeting he gives to every one who buys his wares.



Saturday, Sept. 4th,  
Sheffield.

The fear of the lay-off sure to follow upon the strikes threatened both by the electrical trades unions and by the coal-miners hangs heavier upon the district than the usual smoke—and smoke consumers would be one of the best improvements conceivable for this whole district.

“Everybody’s striking around the whole bloo-ody country if you don’t say good morning in the right tone of voice,” according to one of the men in a huge and modern smelting establishment where it was possible to loaf a number of hours in between occasional inquiries for work at the hands of a gaffer—and equally occasional refusals.

“They’re discharging even the foremen over there,” said a young girl clerk in a grocery-store near by later. “Nothing to do but this all day”—with her hands on her hips. “They’re pushing all the luck away from themselves and from us by their everlasting striking. For myself, I was privately tutored for typing. Lost my place when things got slow. Now there’s no chance. Every girl in the country is studying for typing, so there’s quite too many. I see by the paper that the Labor Ministry says there’s already too many women also in dressmaking, millinery, and upholstery. Still I want to get away from this kind of work. . . . No, there’s not a bathroom in the neighborhood, though the houses are pretty new, too. I think all houses should have them, don’t you?”

“If there’s to be a strike, ’twill be a bloody revolution, that’s sure,” came from several workers outside the gates of one of the district’s largest plants, where, by the way, a number of bookies were doing a very prosperous business at the noon-hour either with the men themselves or with Johnny and Mary who had been sent with the necessary shilling or half-crown together with the folded-up piece of paper carrying the scribbled name of the day’s favorite



horse. "Tell 'im 'e's not to let any one see it, missy," one youngster was cautioned as the bookie gave her covertly a special dope sheet.

"'Tis the bloody lads that's doin' it, naught else. Of course, these miners works 'ard, but they're selfish and avaricious, as I sees it. I'd 'op it quick for Canada except for me mother, but 'ere, as it is, I near gi' up me wages in fines awnd stoppages. No smokin', no this, and no thot—awnd the 'Lloyd George' (health and unemployment insurance premiums taken out of the pay). Especially since we've only two turns the week 'tis naught now of the good screw we 'ad in war times. An' w'en we went down Monday to find a plice roonin' full like, y' know, they tellt us they're full up!"

"The radicals are gettin' 'em these un'appy days when the work there is looks like runnin' out," said one of the local officials of the general workers union, after he had told of the amazing variety of benefits paid its men for total or partial disablement, lockouts or strikes, victimization, wrongful discharge, funeral, etc., etc. "I used to be a radical myself so I can understand when I think about it how every labor leader 'as to suffer from the distrust of 'is men. Still the men here should 'ave more wages. Back in 1914 the standard was below the proper level, and though we're better off now than then, still the miners and other unskilled men are gettin' too much in comparison. Perhaps the new mayor will 'elp us, though most of the workers think 'e's too conservative. He and many others of us still believe in gettin' on by collective bargaining, with the strikes and all that, but the majority is more for political action—also, of course, direct action. . . . The Welshmen? Oh, they always act first and think afterward—just the opposite of your Yorkshire miner friends."

It is easy to believe that thousands of workers here are extremely grateful that the city is lucky enough to suffer

from the great clouds of smoke, for these at least mean work—jobs. The newspapers, however, certainly do give support for a cloudy mood in what seems to me a slumpy Sheffield Saturday, properly so called. The Manchester and Liverpool printers are rebelling against their own national union by going out on strike. Those papers are now being printed in London or elsewhere. A crisis appears to be threatening in the pottery trade in its relations with its 70,000 men making additional wage demands. In Scotland two unions—the National Union of Railway Men and the Blacksmiths Union—are at swords' points. The Yorkshire farmers are striking for six pounds a week—much to the disgust of my steel-making friends who get more—"but look at our work in the 'eat and all!"

In spite of all these difficulties one of the leading steel employers here gave me his opinion that crushing the unions would be the very last conceivable thing for the employer or the company to desire, least of all in steel, where union and employer have each other's confidence.

"It is inefficiency and the 'go-slow' policy on the job—as practised by many non-union men, as well as unionists, that threatens the well-being of the district's industry and workers. For instance, we make a bid for some of our products, estimating seventy hours of labor on it. The men take one hundred and twenty. That means we must ask higher prices of our customers. Our customers, in turn, must ask more from their customers, and these happen to be the public. So the cost of living is made higher. The wages we pay are higher, yes, but the worker has not earned more in buying power. Also, we stand a greater chance of missing the next contract when we bid again, and then the district's workers lose the chance of doing the job. Here in England we are the most individualistic nation in the world. If we could add to that a greater individual productiveness and efficiency, we could be paramount in the trade of all the world.

"No. It's not unions that stand in the way, but the occasional selfish or self-seeking leader near the top or the less important leader who has been made unhappy and vengeful perhaps by some employer's carelessness. Sometimes, too, these second-rate leaders drink too much during important conferences for settling difficult points. But I am sure the way out is not to think of putting industry under the government's management. While serving in London during the war, in charge of important government activities, I saw men being promoted practically as the direct result of their inefficiency. You see, the laws forbid any one being given the sack without the most elaborate arrangements. It also forbids a person's being changed to any other job which pays less than his present position. Accordingly, you see, when a department head wants to rid himself of some poor stick he gives notice to other department heads of his desire to transfer this worker at not less than such-and-such a salary. Many times I've seen these men, after weeks and weeks of waiting for a transfer at the same figure, finally, transferred to a much higher salary!"

An American business man here has also been keeping his eyes and ears open:

"For years and years visitors here from America and the Continent have figured that Sheffield, with its old dark factories and its old hand processes, would last about three months longer in competition with the cutlery manufacturers of the rest of the world. Well, I've been here a long time, and as near as I can make out Sheffield's old industries are going just a little stronger than ever. You see, the cutlery workers here are mostly high-skilled men—the best artisans in the world for the tempering of special steels—on the same job, lots of them, for generations—father and son and grandson, all together. One of the oldest firms here, with the most antique methods, exports just about twice

as much as all the newer chaps combined with all their new plants. Lately there has been a little opposition to the better working conditions urged upon some of the old manufacturers because they say it will make the costs too far above American steel. That, of course, tends to lower American stock with the workers, and now that America has gotten out from under the fine things which President Wilson said, America is not so popular as it was, though the farther down the line you go the more popular it is. One of the quips on the stage has been:

“ ‘Jack, how fast does sound travel?’ ”

“ ‘Oh, I should say about five seconds to the mile.’ ”

“ ‘Well, how far is America from here?’ ”

“ ‘Oh, about 3,200 or 3,300 miles.’ ”

“ ‘Well, there’s something wrong with your mathematics then, old chap, or why is it that the bugle blown here in 1914 wasn’t heard over there until April, 1917?’ ”

He believes that there is justice in the frequent claim that drinking is not so heavy as it used to be. He is not so certain that the Char-a-banc trips are to be accounted an educational factor, considering the advantage taken of the fact that British law permits travellers to be given liquor even in the hours when the pubs are closed to the ordinary citizens. He also feels that a tremendous amount of time and thought is given to racing; his experience did not permit him to add any others to my list as made in a recent shop: “Stable Whispers,” “The Racing Springer,” “Paddock Secrets,” “The Early Bird,” etc., etc. Nor to my recollection of the great piles of publications for the women as lately noticed in a news-stand: “Peg’s Paper—The Price of a Kiss,” “Home Mirror—Her Hateful Lover,” “Forget-Me-Not Novels,” “Smart Fiction,” “Mizpah Novels—A Young Wife’s Secret,” etc., etc.

So I guess, on the whole, I’ll not worry about Sheffield’s ability to take care of herself or, for that matter, of England

in general, seeing that all the rest of the world seems to be about the same distance up in the air. Must catch a train for Sunday up in Lemington and then hope for some interesting days before the catching of a boat—if possible, one that will give me a chance to work my passage and so get a little closer to that problem of the American merchant marine—namely, the American sailor man.

*Later.*

The lad who helped me to the station has, like all the others, his eye on the job.

“Y’ see, I had to leave school and the farm when I was thirteen. Then at fourteen I was making shells for the war—at four pounds the week—not bad, y’ know. Now I’m learning all about running a licensed house—how to serve whiskey and gin and all the various drinks, y’ see. After that, I can get a job anywhere. One thing’s certain, your friend Pussyfoot would ‘cop it’ here in Sheffield! It’s a fine house where I am now—and where you’ve been. They treat even the lowest of the maids as members of the family.”



## CHAPTER VII

### LIVING THE DOUBLE LIFE IN LONDON

Tuesday, Sept. 7th,  
Whitechapel District,  
London, East End.

THREE hundred years ago to-day the Pilgrim fathers sailed out of Plymouth harbor for the New World and evidently this part of the world, at least, thinks they did a good job. Too bad that they failed so often to give to the Quakers, Baptists, witches, Puritans, and others full portions of the same freedom they were seeking for themselves. Perhaps, however, their shortcoming makes it easier to understand how the modern labor problem grows up at the hands of the foreman, superintendent, or manager who only a few years ago may have himself hoped for larger freedom as a worker. It is undoubtedly easier over here than in America to understand how infinitely numerous and complex are the factors in this matter of right relations between employee and employer. To an extent unusual with us the average employer here is forced by the world-wide character of his market to keep his eye—and base his policies—upon the selling prices, market conditions, money and exchange rates, etc., etc., of countries all around the globe. The attitude of the government, not only of Britain but of Italy or Spain, Australia or America, can apparently—and without half-trying—"ball up" the whole matter of a steady or an unsteady job, a happy or an unhappy worker, to say nothing of a happy or unhappy employer. Even the interest or apathy of some strange people three thousand miles away may complicate the whole situation—just as our own unwillingness to eat rice and the English unwillingness

to eat corn tremendously complicated the world's food problem in the days of the submarines.

On the way down here yesterday from Coventry and Leamington our compartment brought together several of those threads which tie the world together here in the manner sure to strike an American.

"A fair place for a man or woman is New Zealand," said the sailor boy on leave from his ship—"that is, if they've no kiddies. But there's no chance for 'ome in two years—with two rooms a-costin' them two pounds a week. Every job 'as a union for it and every man must stick to 'is job—and every woman. A cook can only cook and a maid can only maid. A bartender daren't move from one bar to another, even under the same roof. There in New South Wales the coal miners have been on strike eighteen months with six of the mines now flooded—ruined, you might say. You see, they were promised more money after the war and the government has delayed.

"Servant-girls work only seven and one-half hours and get their thirty shillin' a week besides bein' 'found.' But o' course there's little manufacturing in Australia and practically none in New Zealand. Still, I'm wondering what the New Zealand farmers would do if they should hear that the 10,000 tons of butter for which they get around two bob a pound is sold in London for six. Well, anyway, I've got my job sure because I've served my apprentice and am an able-bodied seaman, and they're gettin' scarce, y' know."

The young and pretty mother was kept too busy by her three children to give him the attention he wanted, and when he got out at the station she only nodded with what must have been a disappointing smile to his cheerful "Ta-ta!" She took more interest in the young coal miner as he waxed enthusiastic over his job as foreman of the machine-cutters in a Midland coal-mine—his job and his last piece of good fortune.

"Well, y'see, I just 'ad an accident—a nawsty one, though a bit of luck wi' it, too. Y' see, as we was workin' at the face a fall came very sudden and I was pinned beneath it. When finally they took me out me left foot was fair smashed to smithereens, ye might say. But all thot did fer me was to give me a new foot, and 'ere ye can see it's a fine one."

He had us all guessing as, in a jiffy, he had his shoe off and was demonstrating with great pride the very latest thing in artificial feet.

"So ye can see 'tis much better than if me real foot 'ad a been there. I would 'ave left it there in the mine if I 'adn't left it across the Channel on Flanders field, ye might say, though we wasn't there just then. Now I get me disability pension from the government and that keeps me in ale money—and, in a manner of speakin', fresh feet!"

From that the talk goes to the wound, the snake-bite the quiet young man's cousin got last month in India—also the cost of clothes and rent out there. The splendid thing is to see how sure everybody feels of himself the moment he can find a place that allows him to connect up the general political or other gossip with some of his own—or at least a relative's or close friend's—actual experience, particularly the experience connected with his job. The surprising thing again, a few days later, is to see how little this vivid and compelling, "close-up" movie of our own personal, six-days-the-week experience there on the job is taken so little note of on the seventh day by the teachers of the art of living in the churches.

To be sure, the minister last Sunday in talking to a group of boys gathered at a mission called work "God's greatest gift to man." The difficulty was that he failed to find anything to say about it indicating that he thought it really attractive in spite of the fact that most of the youngsters are probably teasing the life out of their fathers and mothers to let them quit school and show themselves men by

getting a job. Still if he had aroused enthusiasm for his subject instead of a sense of unpleasant duty, the words of the hymn would have made it seem hardly worth while to bother about it:

“A few more days the cross to bear,  
And then with Christ a cross to wear;  
A few more marches weary,  
Then we'll gather 'ome.

O'er Time's rapid river,  
Soon we'll rest forever;  
No more marchings weary,  
When we gather 'ome.”

Luckily the boys weren't troubled by the words enough to prevent their handling the tune most lustily—so lustily, in fact, that when the prayer followed, it was hard to follow:

“Oh, Lord— Hi sye now, boys, are we goin' to 'ave a bit of silence? Now then— Oh, Lord, we thank thee that— Now, 'ere, Hi tell ye I won't be fooled with—you boys on the back seat there! Now— Well— Oh, Lord——”

Still it is easy to expect great things from a crowd that come so close to taking the roof off with their enthusiastic: “'Ail 'im! 'Ail 'im! 'Ail 'im oo sives you by 'is grice.”

A day or so in Coventry gives a good promise for the way into a better industrial situation. This is the Detroit of Great Britain. The newness of the motor industry has permitted the building of splendidly lighted and well-planned factories for the building of various well-known motor-cars, ordnance, and the making of machine tools. With the large adoption of piece-work the earnings are said to average, at least in certain of the motor plants, seven pounds ten per week. According to one executive the union heads, for the most part, are earnest, honest, and fairly easy to get along with. There is evidently a good deal of discussion back and forth on the engineers' demand of “one man, one machine”

together with the accompanying insistence that every machine must have a skilled man.

Most attractive are the workers' homes and these are, of course, immensely helped by the remarkable cleanliness of the atmosphere. This, in turn, is due to the very up-to-date plan whereby practically all the local factories buy their power of the city electric-light plant—at an extremely low cost. From the huge stacks of this establishment—called by leading citizens “the most efficient electric plant in England”—not a wisp of smoke is to be seen. The Labor party's proposal for cheapening production and improving life throughout the industrial cities of the country by locating such plants at mine mouth certainly look good after weeks in such places as Swansea, Glasgow, Middlesbrough, and Sheffield—not to mention Cleveland, Pittsburgh, South Chicago, etc.

Coventry is said to set the pace for the country on wages, though considered more or less of a law unto itself with so much emphasis on piece-work, skilled men, and exceptional living and working conditions. Certainly there is an exceptional looking lot of men in the plants visited. If any outstanding unhappiness is peculiar to the place it might come from that feeling that the pay for the skilled men is unduly low in comparison with the unskilled—especially likely where as here a threat is being constantly made upon skilled jobs by the rapid advance of the machine tools which permits—in fact, favors—the increasing use of non-skilled or semi-skilled men. Of course, a careful labor diagnosis might discover unreasonable or unfair employers. This is greatly to be doubted, considering the up-to-date-ness of the plants and the way in which most of the employers appear to be alive to the labor problem and at work upon it by means of carefully organized labor departments. One man connected with one of these does feel that the workers are not doing enough to keep the standard of their



living up to their increased earnings: "Men who drank penny pre-war beer now try to demonstrate their progress by drinking shilling whiskey—if not thirty-five-shilling champagne!"

Few cities of the country surely could give a more interesting representation of the newer and more hopeful domestication of the modern industrial system by managers and men working and living steadily and normally under good conditions of air and sunlight and homes and wages and the old historic days of the guilds and the Lady Godivas—also the bell-ringers. In the grand old cathedral the ancient deacons evidently know something about the way men like to feel, that what they are doing is contributing something worth while to the world's history and happiness. Just imagine the satisfaction it must be to the grandchildren and great-grandchildren who doubtless come occasionally to look at the tribute paid their progenitors in the handsomely painted statement which, with others, adorns the vestibule:

"To celebrate the glorious victory of Lord Wellington over the French at Salamanca, a peal was rung on these bells on Monday 17th August, 1812, consisting, of 5,000 changes of Oxford Treble Bob Royal in three hours and 33 minutes by the following persons:

Geo. Hawkes, Treble

Will<sup>m</sup> Phillips, 2nd Treble

etc., etc.

"N.B. The above peal was composed and called by Joseph Keene."

The "reverse English" of such honorable recognition is suggested hardly more than fifty yards away by an ancient pair of disconcertingly well-worn stocks. They were used, in the city's market-place, until 1865!

I wonder if there is any connection between our failure to understand how thoroughly everybody wants recognition when he rings the bell or fires the seething furnace and the general feeling that all the world is walking over a mine. In the laying of that mine by the messing up of our relations with each other, the war appears to have played a much greater part than we at home have realized. I hate to believe the stories told about the loafing done by many workers in those hectic days when "if a man carried a hammer he was considered to be doing hard work," or "every man in his gang paid him a quid a week simply to wake them up at night when the boss came out to have a look" or when "they played cards or cricket or football right there in the mill, with him getting an extra quid for watching out for the boss." "And all because everybody got the idea that the government's purse was bottomless—and is—and right to-day when a man comes from the employment office with the crowd to where you made application for a man, every blessed one of them shoves out his card to you with his 'sign there to show you're "suited"'—with your signature saying that you don't need him because you've already found a man, he can go back to get his unemployment dole—while others refuse the job unless you can promise at least a week of it because otherwise the one-day or two-day job with you may prevent their getting their unemployment dole for the full two weeks."

Back here in London again in the Whitechapel boarding-house it is hard to know where the answer is—especially with J. H. Thomas saying that in his opinion the past few weeks have been the most momentous in the whole history of the British labor movement!

*Later.*

The fireman of the train that brought us into town ought not to be forgot. For himself it's easy enough: "Most of the time sittin' right on this box 'ere, a-coastin' down from

off the Chiltern 'ills." But for his engine: "W'y, it's a shame to treat an engine like this one's bein' treated. 'Ere's to-day, for instance. We come from Oxford up to Wolver'ampton and then from Wolver'ampton 'ere to London. From 'ere she goes back at two o'clock and then on through Banbury to Oxford. But never a w'imper comes from 'er. Like a top she runs, y' know. . . . But it's all from the shortage on account of the war."

Thursday, Sept. 9th,  
Whitechapel, London.

Great good luck has made it possible to see most of the country's labor leaders perform all at once—down at the great national labor conference at Portsmouth to-day. Representatives of over four and a half millions of the country's workers are there up to their eyes—their very serious eyes—in the effort to plan the moves which should follow what their chairman, Mr. J. H. Thomas, has called "the most momentous weeks in the history of the British labor movement." They make a group of very intelligent-looking men—also one which knows how to get business done.

Mr. Thomas never got "fussed" and never seemed to swerve from his desire to keep on the steel rails of reasonable and practicable affairs—yet always with an aggressiveness of manner and of voice which meant that if these steel rails could not be laid, then possibly other emergency materials might be used for the meeting of what he evidently considers is a genuine emergency.

Mr. Clynes, Member of Parliament, in spite of his quiet manner, had no difficulty in getting a splendid hearing at the hands of the whole great thousand—a self-possessed man, evidently respected thoroughly for his sincerity and sense. Mr. Bevens quite disagreed with him as to the particular method, but was thoroughly certain that the labor movement now requires a sort of general staff of all the unions which will not only serve to direct the whole nation

in the time of a nation-wide strike—in the manner of the Council of Action—but will also work continuously for the avoidance of strikes. A very forceful speaker Mr. Bevans certainly is, and much respected for his victory last spring in obtaining the two-shillings-an-hour wage for the dockers and longshoremen.

The best attention of all was given to Arthur Henderson. In fact, it was a regular ovation for his return from a retirement caused by illness. He used to be a Methodist local preacher and is felt to have stood only for what he considers the fairest of Christian dealings throughout his thirty-seven years of connection with the labor movement. He praised the spirit of labor's political and industrial activities of the past few months directed as they were at securing peace among the nations and made a very short but moving appeal for the continuation of the extraordinary unity which has distinguished all the labor groups in their opposition to the possibility of war with Russia. If the Labor party comes into power they will certainly have in both him and Mr. Thomas men of ideals, squareness, and strength—mental and moral.

George Lansbury, editor of the *Herald*, was on hand, and smiling in spite of the general public's—though not labor's—acceptance of the government's charges that members of the *Herald's* staff have been receiving large sums of money and jewels from the Bolsheviks—in fact, that Mr. Lansbury's own son has been in direct contact with the Bolshevik emissaries for placing the *Herald's* columns at their disposal. Lansbury represents a very remarkable combination of highly religious and Christian beliefs and scruples with a highly revolutionary political philosophy. His great word is "love" and he appealed to his audience not to hate capitalists but to consider them only the sad victims of the capitalistic system. He sees the revolutionary movement as a highly spiritual "drive" for bringing into immediate or early operation the brotherhood of man. The orgy



of blood caused by the killing of those whose presence would complicate or endanger the new régime, he appears to regard as a highly unfortunate but inevitable first step toward the reign of good-will which the London Soviet will direct. His view-point made it easier for me to see how the "Bolshevik" leader there in the South Wales mine came into his own willingness to "devote twelve years of my life for the saving of England against the competition of Soviet Russia!"

A rather weak-voiced representative of the co-operative movement reported the strong and steady increase of the co-operative enterprises and called attention to the way in which these are fighting the capitalist régime by constantly reducing the amount of money available for investment for competitive profit.

Among the various "fraternal delegates" the one from Canada appeared surprisingly refined and gentlemanly, but was hardly able to make himself heard. He assured the convention that the "O. B. U.," or One Big Union idea is not so important in Canadian labor matters as its representatives claim. He also appealed to his fellow workers to discount among the workers in the cities and provinces of Great Britain the over-attractive pictures of Canadian life painted by Canadian employers' associations. These pre-paid the passage of workers, but generally produced, within a very few weeks, a greatly disappointed immigrant.

Unfortunately it must be confessed that the two fraternal delegates sent by our own great union movement were far below the generality of speakers. They were given the scant hearing which both the text and the delivery of their greetings deserved.

Without respect to nationality the crowds at the edges of the zone of good hearing complicated the situation for the weak-voiced speakers and for the other listeners with their scarcely suppressed:

"We cawn't 'ear," "W'at 'ave we done to deserve this?"



"Good Lord, 'ere we go for another 'arf 'our!" "Lead 'im out!" etc., etc.

"It is greatly to be regretted that such a huge hall with the acoustics none too good requires such huge physical effort that it always plays into the hands of the demagogues, trained as they are in the art of making their great voices carry to the farthest corners," one of the leaders on the platform whispered to me. "That discourages, you see, the serious and thoughtful discussion which is needed at every convention and particularly at such a critical time as this."

The words of one of the best orators on the programme were lost, not because of acoustics, but because as a representative of the General Federation of Workers of France he spoke in French. It must be said, however, that the crowd came in with its applause quite properly at the end of a highly moving peroration on behalf of a pretty extreme programme whereby all the nations of the world should take over immediately the various industries, beginning first with coal and transportation. When a very distinguished-looking representative of the union of musicians offered the translation, several cheerful listeners called to him to "Why not set it to music?"

The Dutch secretary of the International Federation of Trade Unions made a very masterly speech in English, but was not slow to urge the whole group to rise up against the capitalistic masters.

"'Britains never will be 'slaves,' so your poet sings, but nevertheless that is what they are unless they can take advantage of the present unity to put an end—a victorious end—to the class struggle!"

"Without the British unions and their aggressive and united leadership the proletariat movement of the world cannot build the world progress and the world peace which is envisaged in the eyes of working men throughout the world."

Mixed in the applause that followed were a number of cheers of: "We are for socialism!"

Later this same representative told a small group of us about the disunity of the 261,000 Dutch workers, with 100,000 of them in one general union, 60,000 others in a Catholic union, another 60,000 in a body of anti-revolutionaries, etc., etc. "Seventeen different parties make up our country's Congress, including four different kinds and varieties of Socialists!" He is greatly disappointed that Mr. Gompers, while opposing political action and organization for the American Federation of Labor, nevertheless is perfectly willing to have the various Federation conventions break in upon European politics with this or that resolution regarding Ireland and other parts of the world! He told how international relationships between great bodies of men can be complicated by extremely small, if not trivial, frictions. It seems that in recent international congresses much bad temper has been caused because the American delegates would not follow the rule that any person wishing the floor must send up his name to the chairman and so receive his assignment of time and place. As a result the American delegates would get up and insist upon speaking, calling out finally in their irritation before the gavel finally banged them down: "Mr. Chairman! Mr. Chairman! I insist I have the floor. . . . But I see no one else using it! Why do you refuse me my right to speak? I have tried now six times," etc., etc.

Partly as the result of such misunderstandings and partly as the result of its conviction that the International Federation of Trade Unions is more revolutionary than it cares to be, the American Federation of Labor has not sent in its recent dues and is, accordingly, likely to be barred out from the convention next year. Dutch labor, it says, is almost entirely Socialist. The country has practically no iron and steel industry, though there are 50,000 workers in

the metal trades; most of the country's workers make the textiles that go to Java and similar colonies; the diamond workers in Amsterdam are still the leaders of the skilled workers of the country, though they, too, have fallen somewhat behind as compared with their pre-war pre-eminence over the less skilled and the unskilled workers.

It was possible to meet a number of what, I presume, might be called the intellectuals—men who, like Phillip Snowden, are in politics as leaders of the Independent Labor party, or who are giving their private means and their lives and their educated minds to the advancement of the labor movement. Because these are often not officials, many of them seem to have no representation on the floor, though their names are to be seen at the bottom of such important matters as reports on the cost of living or plans for a tax upon capital instead of income, etc., etc. A group of these expressed to me the belief that American education misses a considerably larger proportion of American children than we patriotic Americans like to believe. Also that we are highly negligent in allowing the situation to continue whereby a few captains of industry can become so enormously wealthy while so many other thousands and millions continue poor.

There seems to be no group in America quite comparable to such a group of "Assistants to the Labor Movement." Even the editors of some of our most labor-favoring papers realize that any efforts to help the American laborer to fight his battles at such a convention would be met with little other than jeers by workers who insist upon their ability to look out for themselves. The reason is, perhaps, that the workers at home have not yet begun to fight on the political as well as on the industrial side. In the nature of the case an outsider is hardly in a position to help directly toward settling an industrial dispute unless given an unmistakable and urgent invitation.

One of the men whose face was distinguishable in the multitude but who had little to say, though he is a member of Parliament and a Privy Counsellor of the realm, is John Hodge, leader, with Arthur Pugh, of the highly successful Iron and Steel Trades Confederation. He is reported to have grown up out of the worst and hardest of steel and iron jobs and to have nothing in common with those leaders who have been educated at Ruskin College. It is the highly intellectual training of these last that is said by some to have overimpressed many American investigators with the vision and constructive thoughtfulness of the English labor movement.

On the whole, however, no one can watch for even a short time the deliberations of these representatives of their working millions without coming to feel that, whatever may be said for the American working man as compared with the British, the English labor leader is without doubt to be considered a better-trained and better-educated man than the American leader. It is one of these leaders that gave me the best summing up of the evils of the irregular job yet encountered.

"Of course, the average employer or citizen is not so far off when he says that the average docker or longshoreman does not want a steady job. It is true that in many cases the men can hardly stand the strain of, say, three weeks of steady work. But this is because the man has been physically and morally demoralized by years and years of never knowing from one day's end to another whether to-morrow's sun will find him at work."

Then he added a phrase which I am inclined to think must somehow get itself written upon the heart of every citizen in Christendom who would wish genuinely to help solve the problem of unhappy workers:

"Irregular work always makes an irregular worker. And an irregular worker is always bound to be an irregular citizen."



That strikes me as one of the most vital and deep-going generalizations yet heard in all my travels and adventures. It goes right to the heart of the matter because it goes right to the heart of the worker, and the heart of the worker is—because it must be in an industrial era—the heart of the man and the citizen.

It's safe to say that a very large proportion of the transactions of such a conference as to-day's, and an even larger percentage of all the words spoken there in more or less bitterness of feeling, would have been made unnecessary if the world could somehow have contrived for, say, the last twenty years, to have worked on that nineteen-word proposition of his. I grow daily more certain that there are millions of workers in the world whose real need is a steady job. By long experience most of these have learned that the only appeal which gets the ear either of the employer or of the public is the appeal which has that appeal for steady work camouflaged, either as an appeal for more wages or for fewer hours, in order that whatever work there is may be spread about as evenly as possible for the benefit of the greatest number of work-needing workers.

When I think of that and of the number of men here who are looking for jobs—and according to the papers it is increasing daily—I almost hesitate to go down-town to-morrow to see about working my passage home. Pretty certainly, the number of others desiring the same opportunity will be large—disquietingly large.

Later.

The day should not close without mention of Portsmouth's glory, the old wooden flagship, *Victory*, where the visitor can see the spot marked, "Here Nelson fell at Trafalgar," or look upon the tables there, on one of the lower after-decks, where the wounded were operated on with only the light of candles. On those scarred but solid decks, too, you can learn again the old truth that desire is at the



bottom of our doings, as when Nelson, given orders to retire from the battle of Copenhagen, put the telescope to his eye and reported, "I can see no signal!" and kept on until the fight was won. He had been looking with his blind eye!

"I'd like to see America and Britain stand together with never more a word of jangle between us," said the Old Salt who rowed us out, and who boasted of knowing "every bloo-ody seagull in the 'arbor 'ere by nime." "Your President there with you, wull, 'e earns 'is wiges, 'e do. But oors, wull, 'e's the biggest pauper we got, ye might sye. 'E costs us four million poon' a year, 'e do, and 'e eyen't worth it. Maybe some dye we'll 'ave a President 'ere."

Whitechapel, London,  
Friday, Sept. 10.

Talk about living a dayful of the double life!

This morning passed dismally enough for the motley, unshaved crowd of us sitting, hour after hour, in the seamen's room in the basement of the American Consulate, ready to spring to our feet the moment any respectable-looking stranger, even faintly resembling a ship's skipper, might enter the room. Many of the men have been here weeks and weeks, spending every day in these same endless hours of waiting, some of them being boarded at near-by places by the Consulate, according to our seamen's law, until a return ship happens along to offer a job home. A package of cigarettes helped wondrously for making almost 100 per cent of acquaintance—in fact, so much prosperity seemed to give to one or two of the worst off a hope that I might contribute a shilling or sixpence to their absolutely exhausted finances. Fortunately, the cleanliness of their morning shave contrasted so strongly with my own condition that a proper alibi was easy for me. Certainly few places could stage discussions of a more world-wide character.

Outside of the usual discussion of jobs, nothing appeared to have quite so universal an interest as the discussion of the world's seaports and their opportunities for vice. Certainly, too, every one tried his best to sidestep the low rating given by the crowd to the man with the fewest adventures along this line. Nor did such conversation elicit any remonstrance from the clerk as being contrary to the numerous signs insisting upon "No violent language or boisterous conduct permitted in the room." At least it was something of a satisfaction to hear again men saying, "Well, I'll tell the world!" "I sure do," or "Some party, believe me!"

Later on, down on the docks, a stevedore treated me as a friend as he brought out a lot of onions from his capacious pockets to add to the bread and cheese and beer and salt that made our humble—also highly dirty and sloppy—repast. His "Hi got 'em off the bloo-ody lighter we're unloadin' 'ere!" recalled my earlier friend and his need of telling the difference between the pineapples and the plums in the absence of "the bleedin' labels eaten off by the bloo-ody rats."

As we left the place together a young lady with exceedingly high heels came mincing by. His words followed with amazing quickness upon the report of his eyes: "Hi pities the bloody bloke that marries 'er, Hi do! All she wants is ter read a bleedin' novel all the blinkin' dye!"

After that—also after a bath and a shave—the use of the telephone made possible a call upon one of the country's leading scholars, thinkers, and writers:

"America, it seems to me, is remarkable for attaining a quick pre-eminence in this or that subject, but in a rather spotty way. Since my first visit over there, twenty years ago, you have made amazing progress. Indeed you have achieved almost pre-eminence in architecture, painting, and in certain fields of science. But, oddly enough, you have

not yet furnished for these present times great philosophers or poets.

"I was struck, also, by finding that many of your high school boys, as, indeed, some of your college seniors, have still no idea of what they are going to do—what field they will enter. Before I was seven I began to absorb the idea that I was to go in for the intellectual life. My brother was apparently judged a little less quick with his mind, so he was at a similarly early age practically brought up for the life of business. Our young men at nineteen are probably two years older than yours. On the other hand, you have four times as many students in your secondary schools, and eight times as many in your colleges and universities as we, although your population is only twice ours.

"As you know, our civil service permits intellectual workers to earn a living. That and our 'Old Gold'—the one hundred or several hundred pounds of yearly income inherited from some old inheritance which may have been in the family for generations. This permits a man to take a place in a government office or a part-time university appointment at a salary below what he might need, and still devote considerable time to the following of his real desires along his own particular line. The trouble just now, however, is that we have what we are calling 'the new poor'—people whose bonds, though safe, have lessened in real value through the lessened value of the pound. The 'new rich' have, by the same token, come in with the high dividends permitted by the war. Thus, those who went in for security are finding themselves poor, while those who took risks are rich. . . . What all of us could wish here is that society will either change into a definite system in which service shall be the aim rather than profit, or that more and more business men may go in, as they seem to me to be going in there in America, for combining service with business, and with moderate profit."

Still later in the day the leader of one of the most conservative organized groups of employers in the country made the astonishing statement that, so far from wishing that the unions might be done away with, as an American official in a corresponding office would probably have wished:

"We want *more* power—not less—for the union heads. Then we can work out together the best possible agreements for the various industries and be sure that those agreements will be kept, without so much troublesome pressure from the union members, who have not had the opportunity to think the whole thing through. It is unthinkable that Britain should ever go back to an industry in which the individual employer competes with other employers of the country, each fighting out with his own workers the question of wages, hours, conditions, etc. Stronger unions rather than fewer unions is what British industry needs."

Unfortunately another group of officials of an employers' group, dealing with the representatives of one group of unions, reported continued difficulty with members of the building-trades unions. In one case this had resulted in their getting important pieces of work done by union officials themselves, who worked after hours secretly and at rates considerably below the union terms. It was one of these officials—of the Employers' Association—who expressed the feeling so generally encountered here, namely the feeling of the advantage of security given the government's civil-service jobs as compared with the ordinary business job:

"Of course it was a quite serious decision, you know. But in spite of the security of the government service, and in spite, too, of the rather unusual social recognitions which come to the men of the state or diplomatic department as compared with a business man, earning perhaps three times as much, still I left it after a number of years and *took a*



*chance.* You see, that meant giving up my pension and all the career my place offered. With my education, you see, also, I was able to take the senior exam instead of the junior exam, which is open only to men who have had comparatively little schooling but have worked up from the bottom."

To-day's telephoning brought forth a great flood of murderous designs upon the equipment, and also some answers from other sufferers as to the why of such awful equipment and arrangements. But it is too late to go into that now, especially in view of the need of being on hand early to begin the morning's discussion at the seamen's room of the comparative facilities of Buenos Aires, Singapore, and Hamburg for dulling the edge of a sailor's lonesomeness.

Sunday night, Sept. 12,  
Whitechapel, London.

A short ride farther east into Canning Town gave an interesting morning with London's unionized lightermen, also with their officials, including, best of all, Mr. Harry Gosling, one of their thoughtful and powerful representatives in the Triple Alliance. Mr. Gosling has evidently been one of the workers, for his manner is very much that of his members, most of whom appeared quite steady citizens in their Sunday clothes. His seriousness of manner made any large voice or strenuousness of action unnecessary.

Almost every word spoken by him or his associates disclosed again how thoroughly the immediate conditions of the job constitute the chief compulsion which must be attended to by the workers.

"This unemployment question, friends, is with us a question not so much of the existence of jobs. It is more a question of the distribution of the jobs that exist. To-day men are coming to the union offices by scores and scores in search of work—men who 'ave 'ad no place for ten, sixteen,



and twenty weeks. At the same time others—and some of you chaps 'ere to-day—are working overtime. Gentlemen, let the man in you tell you that's not right. If everybody, after 'is six turns, we'll say three days and three nights, would stop and give these others a chawnee, then all would be right. Of course, I know that the reason you don't do it is because you're not keen to cut out the five shillings for the overtime for yourselves nor to save that penalty to the employers. I know, too, that if I was to ask you, all of you who 'ave 'ad more than six turns the week could give willingly to buy food and shoes for the poor chaps with no place. But still you're not willing to let them 'ave your turn in the line. But, men, I tell you, a job is food—it's bread and shoes, it's respectability, everything, all the good things you know."

His every word spoke to me of a sincerity which no one could be dull enough to doubt, yet one or two there were who rose to ask: "Is it true that the honorable secretary signs agreements with our employers in secret?"

About another less important leader a near-by member muttered under his breath: "Thot mon 'e tikes all the work 'e can get all around the clock—every stitchin' hour."

"'Ow about these 'ere boys wot comes in and tikes a mon's job? 'Ow about it, Mr. Secretary? I guess thot's right, not 'arf!" called another.

Apparently that sixteen "bob" a day, with special overtime pay, attracts men down to the docks in very serious numbers the first moment jobs grow scarce in any part of the industrial world. Even though only badgemen are supposed to be taken on by the foremen, some of these, even though members of unions, are apparently careless. Meanwhile the nature of the job seems, as always, to have suffered change along with the growth of the lighters or barges and the whole industry:

"Time was, as the older of you well do know, w'en a

barge that 'eld fifty tons was big. W'y I've seen the 'ole firm get out to make a fuss over a 'undred tonner! And now they're three 'undred tons and more—and nobody troubles except the small crew tryin' to 'andle 'em. In those days, too, our employers knew us all, and we them. Now it's a company, and that company is, perhaps, the Great Western Railway. And the Great Western Railway, they say, is the P and O Steamship Line. And that's capitalism, and capitalism 'as its roots and its stations all over the world. And further, men, while they work together we working men work by ourselves, everybody tryin' to get all the work 'e can. We're all too individualistic. That's the weakness of us workers.

"Now it is those combined employers that threaten our comrades, the miners. They want to first break them down to lower levels of livin'. Then 'twill be our turn. . . . Of course, the miners are producin' less. But that's because the owners are workin' the worst possible seams as long as the government 'as control. To 'elp them we must stand together—just as you saw by the papers we did in all the meetin's there at Portsmouth last week. Not a word of dissent was there in the papers. Now that the government's buyin' up all the papers, we can get practically no space for explainin' labor's side of the miner's controversy."

Altogether such words spell a serious situation just ahead. Yet I came away from my new friends feeling sure they could be trusted to show much reasonableness, even in the most trying of eventualities.

At noon my table companion at a greasy East End eating-place showed a much higher head of steam—with less assurance of similar reasonableness in case of increased pressure:

"'Fit for 'eroes to live in'—thot's wot they told us afore we was let out from the bloo-ody war! Awnd 'ere's me out o' work fer months and months. Not a plice in the 'ole

bleedin' country fer onto ten months!—me thot allus had a good berth and money in me pocket, pre-war. Awnd would be still lookin' but fer a friend, a personal friend, y' understawnd? thot gives me a bit o' work now and then—with me arm that 'as two elbows—'ere! see w'ere 'twas broke by the governor on the tank's engine awnd 'ad ter be set three times.

"I tell ye, it's the government thot's at the bottom of it all—the government with the police, the police thot's allus tryin' to do yer dirt. Fair villains they are, Ga blime! It's like this: 'ere ye are awnd ye've met up with a few friends, y' see? Awnd ye 'ave a drink with Jack awnd then ye 'ave a drink with Joe, awnd then with yerself, o' course. Yer feelin' fit again and 'appy—more like a bloody 'ero than ye've felt before fer weeks, y' understawnd?—with yer 'avin' no plice awnd all. Not drunk, mind ye? It tikes, I'll sye, seven bob to get me drunk. Because, as I sees it, a mon's not drunk joost becus 'e staggers a bit—not till 'e's 'elpless—fair 'elpless and 'opeless, like, y' understawnd? Then I'll sye 'e's drunk. Some folks cawn get drunk on a few 'arf-pints awnd some thinks they's drunk when they eyen't. Well, yer steps out onto the street and 'ere's a bobby, and 'e syes to yer: 'Pass along, there, Jack! Pass along!' Well, ye pass along, but not so fast as the government would like, so 'e steps on yer 'eel. Then yer syes somethin' about it to yer government—thot's the policeman, y' understawnd? "'Ere!' yer syes, "'Ere! wot yer doin', eh?"—awnd 'e locks yer oop. Awnd there yer gets three months 'ard.' I've seen it dozens and dozens o' times! 'Fit fer 'eroes to live in!' Not 'arf!"

His constant reference to pints of beer rather than drinks of whiskey is in line with most of my observations to date, namely that any régime of "beer and light wines" would stop far short of solving the drink problem here, whatever it might do in America. As a matter of fact, a newly

issued government report states that of 1,505 persons charged with drunkenness, 45 per cent were due to beer alone, to "spirits" alone 42 per cent, and to both together 13 per cent.

As we came out into the street crowd—it included some mildly intoxicated young boys and girls repeating certain obscene words in lieu of conversation—one of the most disreputable of "masculine hags" yet seen was being told by a passer-by:

"Dirty Dick's yer name—or bloo-ody well should be"—only to receive his reply:

"Well, I'm not dirty-minded like yerself, anyway, you ———," for two moments of perfectly unprintable epithet.

This evening the candles inside the starched lace curtains of most of the district's front windows disclosed the celebration of the Jewish New Year's eve. On all sides men with great beards and long, black, alpaca coats betook themselves in reverend and solemn manner to the synagogue, while others filled the saloons, among them a large matronly lady, who could be seen from the street to stand treat to a sizable group, of which a new daughter-in-law was evidently the centre. Three or four well-dressed and modest young Jewish girls of fourteen or fifteen, when politely approached, were willing to give their interpretations of their surroundings:

"Not one in a hundred of the Jewish people here drink—like the English do. It's terrible!" one of them, with the face and eyes of a poetess, explained as a woman came along, nursing a hungry baby, and sat down wearily on the steps of the pub, jiggling a second baby nervously as she watched the door. "But I think it's quite plain why the Jews live such fine lives. You see it's because every good Jew prays to Jehovah. Every day and every morning every good Jew prays, and, you see, that gives him cour-



age. Without courage it is hard to live well, don't you think?"

A few minutes later, and much to my amazement, they all advised me as one interested in seeing how London's unfortunates live:

"Why don't you visit a London slum?"

Still, hardly more than a turn around the corner from them, an hour or so later, brought me upon three of the most dishevelled, degraded, and depressing wrecks of womanhood that one could wish never to behold. Crumpled up, they were upon the low stonework of a church's iron fence—with heads sunk upon their chests and eyes shut hard, as though in the effort to shut off thought of their crumpled lives. Here, too, as in Glasgow, amazement and loathing stepped hard upon the hopeful heels of pity when, before I was past, one of them announced herself a member of the most ancient of trades:

"For all their fine clothes the tarts ye'll find in Picadilly are no better!" With a jerk she opened the most disreputable of greasy great-coats upon the filthiest of corsets!

Then the compulsion of somebody else's job came along to rob her and her companions of the fence's scanty comforts.

"Ye see, I've got to keep 'em movin' off the main streets," explained the policeman. "If I didn't somebody might come along and find 'em sleepin' there, or mebbe find 'em dead—mebbe dead for hours, as they 'ave been found before this. Then it would be me before the captain with 'im sayin': 'Oho, so you wasn't passin' thot way? Off yer beat, was ye? Well, thot'll be so many days off fer ye!' So there ye are! In a cellar-way, mebbe, they'll not be so easy seen.

"But at that the place 'as much improved in twenty year. 'Twas right over there—where ye're lookin' now—that Jack the Ripper did some of his jobs. Good night to ye."



It is amazingly easy here, I must say, for all to see such awful living and moving pictures of the dreadful depths to which men and women can sink when they lose their hold on the job. Perhaps that is one cause of the serious words of those lightermen and stevedores this morning. They trace the honor of their profession back to the days when—in the absence of the modern cranes—the disposers or placers of the cargo had to be skilled artisans, and they still take great responsibility for their huge barges. So it is not strange, I suppose, that they feel that the status to which they have now attained must be guarded by eternal vigilance, aided—unfortunately—by that alert distrust and suspicion which comes from fear in the effort at self-preservation.

At any rate it makes a fellow's heart heavy, even though that heart still insists that at all these levels, high or low and in between, men and women seem about equally hard on the job of trying to persuade themselves that, somehow or other, life is worth living, and that the next turn of the wheel will bring a better day.

Monday, Sept. 13th.

A package of American cigarettes did wonders this morning as a maker of friends in the seamen's room.

"Yes, I'm English born, and I've been workin' at engineerin'. But 'ere you've got to have a pedigree before you can get a job. So I'm tryin' to get back for a go at salesmanship in the States again. 'Avin' only my first papers, God knows when I'll get a ship. Last week, 'ere, the clerk 'anded me a pen to sign on. Just then along comes a chap that wants the place, and because 'e's a full American and I've only first papers, 'e gets it. That's fair, I suppose, but tough. And now I'd 'ave trouble to get onto a 'lime-juice' boat (British) because of those same first papers. What I can do I don't know. I've only three pounds left!"

"While we were waiting for our boat out there on the Baltic," said a bright-faced young sailor of Australian birth, "the Bolsheviks came along and made us go to prison." With that, of course, we all gathered 'round. His voice and manner were enough to convince all of us at least of the truth of his tale.

"Days and days we were cooped up in a house—nobody knew what for. One night the soldiers came into the room and knocked two old women in the heads with their muskets. So we all went out with the soldiers—excepting some of the best-looking young women. They cried out to me to help them, and if it would have done any good I'd have laid down my life, I swear to God. But what could I do with a penknife in my pocket? For weeks we all had to stay with hundreds of others in a wire barricade in one of the Russian towns out in the country. . . . Soldiers? I should say not! Why, they tore the clothes off the women and made pants by wrappin' them around their own legs! Anything to keep warm! I gave my coat to a young woman, and if she didn't fall right down and kiss my feet! I took off some of my underclothes for a baby, and I swear to God the mother worshipped me for days! Women—taken away from their families and husbands—were all the time having babies there right out in the open air! Of course they all died, and we buried them. If only some of the Bolshie agitators here could see what I seen!

"Get out? Well, we couldn't stay there and die, could we? A big Swede—more than six feet tall he was—and strong!—well, I'll say he broke twenty big stones drivin' a railway spike with 'em through a short heavy piece of wood. And all the time he was chucklin' or swearin' under his breath—you know what I mean, schemin' his plan. There was a guard on each side of the square—just like this, see? Well, here was the guard just outside. My Swede friend, he goes up and talks to him a bit—with his spiked stick

under his coat. Pretty soon he calls out to one of the brightest of the girls—a Finnish girl, she was. And when the guard comes up close to the fence to talk to her, particular like, y’ understand?—the Swede he pushes his arm out quick through the barbed wire. It cut him somethin’ terrible. It was all sore for days. But he grabs Mr. Guard around the neck and pulls him over to him with his arm—like this, see?—and then all at once he drives this spike—on that short, heavy stick, y’ understand?—right into his head. I’ll bet you it went in this far—a full two inches. Say, I’ll never forget the sound of it crunchin’ through the poor devil’s skull and into his brains if I live to be ninety! Well, we all walked out—the five of us in the scheme—and maybe we wasn’t happy when we walked to Helsingfors!”

It made a big impression, but everybody had his mind too much on his own troubles to forget them long.

“On the beach at B. A. (Buenos Aires) I vas,” said a fellow citizen born in Germany. “Only two-t’ree boats a mont’ from dere, dey vas. Awful. I dink I starve dere. New York I vant now.”

“Well,” testified another, “I was in the hospital here longer’n that, and they don’t give a man no food worth mentionin’. Yes, I had the old stuff bad, all right—and so did the whole ship’s crew of us—every blinkin’ one. But they was poor devils there that will never get out except they’re carried out, y’ understand? And those that do get out—if they does—they’d shoot themselves if they had any sense. Awful they was! Awful!

“Yes, I’ve seen vice in every country, from the Esquimaux to the New Zealand and Australian natives. But it takes a woman of Denmark to find a sailor that’s lost his money and sleepin’ on a park bench, maybe, without nothin’ in the world, and take him to her room and give him food and a night’s lodging, and wash his clothes for him and have ’em all dry w’en he gets up in the mornin’, and no

charge, mind ye. I calls that Christianity even if she wasn't wot you'd call a moral woman. . . . I'm forty-two years old now. It's only two years since I began to dissipate, but, believe me, I've kept it goin' ever since."

If possible at all, I'll hope to see if he has as definite a reason for his turning to the left at forty as my old friend, the repairer in the South Wales mine, had for his turning to the right at the same mile-post.

The conversation of these men is certainly wonderful for wearing seven-league boots. In every three sentences they travel down to the depths of moral degradation, or up to the heights of strong men's rugged hopes and back—beside going four times 'round the world. As to that, I did pretty well myself. For the next half-hour sent me miles and miles in terms of psychological distance: after a quick change in a public wash-room, I sat down to lunch with an American captain of commerce whose success is world-known.

"Somehow or other," he said, "fear must be put out of men's minds as the chief motive to get them to work. If we could do that then the whole problem of industrial relations would be infinitely simplified. But employers have little right to try to lessen the power of the unions until they themselves can agree to lessen the worker's fear and the need of the protection which the unions afford. So the obstacle is in the short-sighted employers as much as in the short-sighted workers and leaders of workers."

Still later a labor leader of international fame showed that he had been doing some thinking about the newest phases of this problem of jobs as between the various peoples:

"I am for common sense—not Bolshevism. I want to see the country grow up—not blow up. Some of my Italian Socialist friends say to me: 'England should give us its coal—and no charge. You British have no right to possess such things in such unfair quantities. No nation has.



That makes the enmity and war in the world. They should all be pooled.' I tell them: 'Will you pray to God to move our coal mountains to Italy, or will you have me persuade my Welsh friends to get it out for you for nothing?'"

Then he gave in a manner helpful to long remembrance, a statement of this whole huge complex human problem, which has been caused, after all, more or less by the fixedness of nature's disposition of coal and ore, wheat land and forest or desert, rivers, harbors, or precipices:

"We can only raise enough food here to support about seven of our nearly fifty million people. In order to get the food for the other forty, or forty-three, we must give—we must export—the things other people need from us. That's mostly coal. If we can't export coal, then in order to get both jobs and food for those other millions, we must export our last resource—and our first liability—our human flesh!"

As we discussed how rapidly labor is becoming an international problem just because the human flesh of the laborers can, if necessary, be so easily transferred from one country to another—more easily than the mountains and coal-mines—a secretary came to his elbow with her: "Please sign this letter for the Continent, sir, for the evening *Aero Post!*"

Verily these be thrilling times!

Wednesday, September 15.

The threatened coal strike is very unpopular in the basement of the American Consulate. The shortage of stocks is causing many American boats either to delay their sailing or to go to the Continent to fill their bunkers. So for all of us the chances look poor for getting home via the fore-castle route. Daily the crowd in the chairs and on the window ledges, tables, and boxes grows more discon-



solate—and more and more anxious to talk of other times and climes:

“Nobody can’t make no fun in Hamburg—even with feefty marks to the dollar and good champagne for dollar-feefty. We bring last month frozen meat cargo from South America. Fellow can’t talk—must alla time joost stand at bar for get droonk; then go home to bed. No fun”—according to a naturalized sailor of Belgian birth.

“A cargo of champagne—that’s wot we had,” in the words of another. “And at San Francisco we was sixty-eight cases short—with bottles all over the boiler-room that took us hours throwin’ ’em out onto the grates.”

“There in the Bering Sea we done salmon-fishin’. With a little yeast and some squeezed fruit and a secret still we had in the fo’c’stle, everybody wondered how was we gettin’ so fearful stewed. Finally we had to take and distil beans. Say, when you took a sip o’ that stuff, you knew you had a drink!

“Why should a man bother with passports and such rot—a man who’s been goin’ thirty years without ’em?” His red face, gray hair and oilskin coat certainly looked the part. “I tell you I been out there twenty years in the Northwest fishin’ and sealin’ in steamers and wind-jammers full of lumber, and here two years on a tug and all. Second mate’s ratin’ I got, I tell you. And now they want a passport!”

“Why can’t a man go anywhere’s he likes?” said a tall, lean, husky fellow with an evil eye. “I tell you the world was made for folks, and not for governments. It’s all the same everywhere. We’ve got to work too blinkin’ hard. Why don’t we learn from the Hindus? Out there it takes ten men to do one man’s work. Then everybody would beg us to take a job everywhere. Out in Australia there’s a police-station every few miles. You’ve got to keep movin’, but you do get the eats until you get a job.”

"Well," said another, "in Denmark there's only a few million workers, but, believe me, they keep everybody else out—and all to protect their jobs."

To-day when a fine-looking ship's captain appeared, the talk stopped instantly, and in a moment everybody was on his feet crowding around him. When he finally took on a cook, the rest of us stood up, drinking in every word and trying, as it were, to absorb the virtue of the ceremony vicariously, like a lot of bridesmaids at a wedding. Every one of us figuratively licked our chops at the bare sight of a man getting a job. When the lucky dog was finally signed on, the skipper gave him a few shillings for paying his debts and reporting on board. The fellow's last words as he passed out from us proudly with our congratulations gave us all a little hope:

"Well, for a pound here a fellow can get pickled to the eyebrows. I wonder what I can do with this."

So maybe the captain will be back for another cook to-morrow.

After going about the district for a long time in search of a restaurant which matched the level of my obvious disrespectability, a fairly decent one had finally to be entered. At sight of myself in the glass, wearing an amazingly mean set of jaw and eye in the midst of better-dressed people, it was easy to recall the words of a boy the other day:

"Of course I gotta stop at New York City to get some clothes before I want my folks to see me."

Also easy to understand how meanness of visage goes so generally with meanness of vestments. It is undoubtedly a means of what might be called "spiritual self-protection." It is a man's way of saying: "Of course all you guys in your good clothes think you're a lot better than me. But I tell you, it ain't so. You may fool yourselves and others, but you can't fool me." That declaration requires effort, and the effort shows in the lines which make that expres-

sion. I wonder if this same running up the flag of independent and aggressive self-belief under trying circumstances does not explain much the same look upon the face of a young woman who is perfectly well-dressed but whose conscience brings those same gnawings of doubt which are caused by such clothes as mine.

The same general motive, also, I am sure, is behind the generous tip by means of which I unconsciously tried to impress the young lady with my innate rightness in spite of all appearances. It is also pretty surely the reason why the poor so generally think it necessary to go the full limit in the matter of, say, a funeral. Just as I felt this noon, they feel, doubtless, that they start far behind the line and that, therefore, they must make a real splurge which leaves no doubt of the full rightness of their intentions.

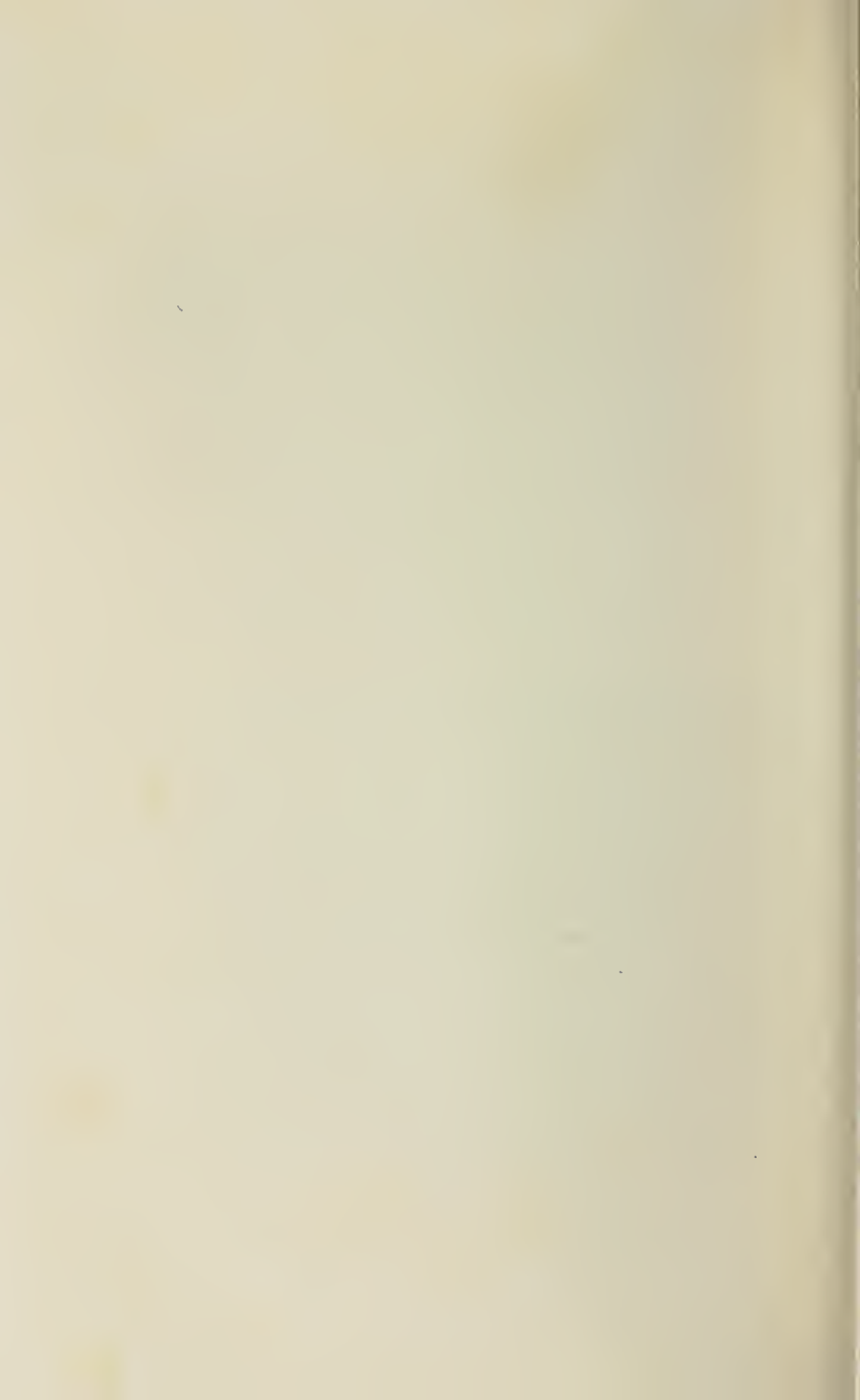
At all these restaurants, good and bad, all classes of men seem to spend a lot of time talking about their various wagers on this horse or that. A daily paper, by the way, gives the opinion of a judge that:

"Betting is particularly rife in congested industrial communities such as ——. The streets are infested by betting touts and agents abound in the workshops. Daily, thousands of bets are made, and thousands of pounds wagered. No class or section of the community is free from indulgence in it. . . . The presence of bookmakers' agents in the workshops is a matter which has long been the subject of bitter complaint by the leading employers of the town. Not only is time wasted by the men in discussing betting chances among themselves, and in making bets with these agents, but the whole system is productive of slackness: frequently the foremen are inclined to wink at what is going on, as they themselves are doing a bit of wagering. Betting on football results is carried on on a large scale, and although the law has now made coupons illegal, that form of speculation is now going on in a different form.



THE AUTHOR AS HE IS AND AS HE WAS WHEN IN SEARCH OF WORK IN BRITAIN.

Meanness of visage is undoubtedly a means of what might be called "spiritual self-protection," . . . a man's way of saying: "All you guys in your good clothes think you're a lot better than me, but it ain't so."





The printed coupon cannot be distributed but a 'coupon' can be written out and sent to the proper quarter."

Around the noon-hour, too, the competition for the very scarce public 'phones is largely caused by the placing of wagers.

Which reminds me of recent listenings as to the trouble there. It appears that the government has lost on the last fiscal year, almost exactly the four million pounds which the 'phones were making for their private owners when taken over a few years ago. General testimony is that little, if any, new equipment has been put in, and one informant says that the government's first step was to dismiss almost all the technical experts drawing more than 800 pounds a year. Every village and city postmaster is, accordingly, the man of last authority over an enterprise which requires a huge amount of scientific knowledge and oversight for its efficient maintenance and development.

This is in line with what appears a quite general lack here of respect for the technician and scientist. As a telephone exchange grows in size, the cost of handling each individual call increases instead of decreases. This, accordingly, requires a constantly increasing charge on patrons unless it can be offset by increasingly scientific short cuts and arrangements. These are hardly favored by the postmaster's training, by the certainty of the postmaster's life job as a civil servant, or by the general absence of the usual motive of financial profit. Whatever the cause, business men here certainly lack one of the facilities enjoyed by their American competitors. I understand that there are two 'phones per one hundred of population here as against twelve in the States. The strange thing is that while the business man here apparently accepts such handicaps so calmly, he is quick to see the thrust of competition when a big order of coal or machinery fails to be captured by British mills—as in the case of a big electric plant re-

cently ordered from Berlin by one of the large cities of Wales.

Called this afternoon on Robert Williams of the National Transport Union. Unlike the docker's union official of last week at Portsmouth, he is unwilling to admit that the irregularity or other conditions of the docker's job have any particular influence on their view-points: "When temptation and opportunity jibe, then a man falls—that's all there is to it."

He completely sidesteps all thought that the leaders should work to regularize the living of their members by working to regularize their jobs: "You see, they all like to work when they like to—and there you are!"

After we had got into a dispute about Marxianism and I had backed out in order to avoid unpleasant complications, he gave a very good statement of the union official's responsibility as a spear-head rather than a projector:

"We leaders are but the puppets of the pressure from beneath. That pressure depends upon our members' mood. That mood—that temper—in turn, changes from month to month, and season to season, according to the pressure of circumstances upon them at the time—like the high cost of living, possible war with Russia, etc., etc."

It was well this came as soon as it did, else I should have lost it; for when, a moment later, I asked whether he did not think that this pressure might be disastrous unless the leaders thought more about the worker's education, he gave me an unpleasant look, said something very pointed about the "wrong pew," and got up—and I shrugged my shoulders and walked out.

He is one of the recent labor visitors to Russia who came back completely convinced of the success of Bolshevism. Some of his friends say that while he is very revolutionary in his spoken views, he is quite cool and conservative when

it comes actually to taking the radical step. It is easy to see that if he wishes to continue as a radical leader, he must have the backing of a radical membership. In that case the last thing he ought to do would be to work toward regularizing that membership's jobs. For that would hardly fail to make his members less radical—and then they'd "give him the sack."

"Governesses' Benevolent Institution" was the name of an unusual association, or union, noted shortly after. Near it was a sign of the "Adult and Juvenile Funeral Society"—doubtless for making sure that a person's last public appearance is accomplished with due respect and ceremony.

"I have lost five months of work looking for a house," a woman testified at the Marylebone court yesterday. The cause is evidently the same absence of building during the war as makes trouble at home. The sale of municipal bonds for furthering the erection of homes throughout the country appears to go slowly.

Daily the certainty of the coal strike, set now for September 22, grows greater. The lack of coal has already caused so many empty bottoms that the freight rate on bacon and other incoming foods has had to be raised. This, with the lowered value of the pound resulting from lessened exports, is raising prices and making serious complications generally. Orders for American automobiles are being cancelled right and left: the exchange makes them entirely too expensive. Evidently our friends over in Detroit and Cleveland are going to pay the price of the unhappiness of my "buddies" there in the South Wales coal-mines and ports. So it looks as though, whether they are conscious of it or not, the laborers of the world—also the capitalists—depend for their bread and butter—or jam and cake—upon the well-being of not only their fellow laborers, but also their fellow capitalists all over the world.

Thursday afternoon,  
September 16th.

"The bloo-ody rine (rain) don't make no difference to the bleedin' gulls, *do it?*" said a husky worker, waiting in the line to carry the empty fish boxes back to the waiting lighters there at Billingsgate early this morning.

Apparently the laborers come here from all over London. Many of them have lurid tattoo marks on their husky arms, others wear the coat of an old soldier, or perhaps the sweat-rag of the fireman, with, occasionally, a smashed-in derby or dicer in memory of better days. Most of the carriers wear a huge hat heavily padded, nevertheless the strain on the neck and shoulders must be great enough when a fellow starts off with a box weighing 150 pounds or so, which it has taken two men to lift up onto his crown. The place is surely a lively combination of the aroma of steaming crabs or lobsters, sloppy floor, dripping oilskins, sweating workers and yelling salesmen:

"'Ere you are, sir! Sixpence the pound! Right 'ere!" "Wot cheer, there, Bill?" "Gangway! Gangway, please!"—with perhaps a "*Thank you!*" as you turn to find a man about ready to throw his box of fish at your feet.

Before the middle of the morning it is almost as quiet as the old church next door. In the effort to secure that empty bunk in the forecabin, I followed the advice of the clerk in the seamen's room to visit the American boats in the harbor, away down the river. But with them all coal appears too important and time too unimportant:

"Well, we shan't be in Hamburg more than a month—that is, if we don't bunker there. But if the strike comes on, we'll have to," was the testimony gained on board a big merchantman, full of lumber from Scandinavia and the Baltic.

"D—d slim, I'd say," said the chief engineer of another



big freighter, when asked about the chance of getting back to God's country. "Two weeks from now at least before we sail for home via Holland."

"Nine months we've been out of San Francisco—with lumber to South America, and then frozen meat from there," said a group of four clean-cut but homesick American boys in a very decent-looking "fo'c'sle." "That's too long without a sight of home. Thank God, we're paid off to-night. . . . Yes, there's bedbugs all over the place now, though we've worked hard to stop 'em. But they give us pretty good food, and these quarters aren't bad. Hot and cold water you'll find in the showers across there, with clean towels and everything."

Everybody on all the boats to-day, and at the seamen's room all week, is sure that the American sailor now enjoys the best conditions of any in the world. The difficulty seems to be that with jobs ordinarily so plentiful in America, the months away from home appear to spell the height of unhappiness and dislocated living.

Alongside these boys were Norwegians, who have been away from home uninterruptedly for seven years, without apparently minding it in the least. "Gotta make a livin' somehow, don't you?" one of them put it after he had told of keeping in fairly close touch with his friends, from one of whom he'd had a nice long letter—six years ago!

On the way back into the city a negro told of his birth in French territory on the African Coast, and of his last seven years and British citizenship in the British army:

"My friend in jail"—business of thumb to mouth with head thrown back to indicate the reason. "Fined seven shillings, sixpence. I go up to pay and get him out. Canadian he is. Know him only one week, but he speak to me nice language—friendly, you know? . . . W'iskey is bad



for poor man. . . . But me, I drink four w'iskies and no get drunk. Get out here. Good-by."

Later an electrician got into the compartment:

"There's a big difference, I tell you, out there in America—I mean Canada. You go right up to a foreman and talk to 'im like Tom, Dick, or Harry. O' course, you know 'e's a foreman, and you respects 'im, but there's none of this 'ere clawss idea.

"And when they puts in machinery, they don't let it wear itself out like of old age—you know what I mean? They expects to ride with the times and scrap it when a better one comes along. 'Ere they use it till it's worn out. I've seen it many times as old as the factory. Old, they are, and slow—and dangerous. . . . I came back from there durin' '15. Slack work there was out there, and all closed down like a drum. They refused me in the army here. For why? I don't know.

"Anyway, our union—the Electrical Trades, it is—'as progressed by leaps and bounds. The leaders are playing big right now. They're going to make us the key industry, though the mawsters are plain nawsty, with the lock-out and all, up North. There's points on both sides, and that's part of the inquiry they're going to make. The government's too wise to set its 'ead against us right now."

"Fed up! I don't care a rap what happens now. Coal strike or not—what's the use?" This was the wail of a fairly prosperous-looking passenger at a station where a change had to be made. "J. H. Thomas, it looks like to me, is on both sides—runs with the hares and hunts with the hounds. Smillie wants nothing but Bolshevism. I have a friend just back from Russia. He says it's awful. Conscripting labor and no two laborers from the same town allowed together in the same gang so that 'townies' can't get together and get their wind up." (Make trouble.)

At any rate the experience of ten or fifteen days' work on

the ocean home is apparently to be denied—for longer waiting is impossible. At that, I guess I can get along with having done it twice in college days—though, of course, the cattle puncher's work is different from the deck-hand's or the oiler's job that I've been hoping for.

*Later.*—The hoped-for ship seems to have come at last! have just learned by 'phone that an American skipper is there at this moment taking on a full crew for an immediate start for New York! So here goes to taste again the joys of the fo'c'sle. Here's hoping that all the stories and sights of this morning are correct in painting huge improvement in the life on the bounding main over that of twenty years ago.

Friday, September 17th.

For a moment yesterday afternoon it looked as though everything was all set for departure Saturday on board a big freighter. Everybody in the seamen's room was smiling the proud smile of self-respecting holders of real jobs by the time I got there.

"Oiler, messman, or deck-hand," was the catalogue I gave of my seafaring abilities when the skipper asked if I was a full-fledged American and had had experience.

"All right, we'll take you on as an oiler. Got your passport? Well, bring it here to-morrow morning at nine all ready to sign on. We sail Saturday at ten."

All the way between him and the door I was seeing myself in the hot engine-room, listening to the hopes and fears of my fellow workers in between the throbs of the big engine of the great boat through all the hours of the next fifteen days—or would it be fifteen, or only ten, or maybe even twenty?

"New York?" said the skipper when I went back to ask him. "Why, we get to New York quite shortly.

First we go to Antwerp and then to New York—*via South America!*”

And to think that if I had signed on and then had failed to turn up this morning, I could have been arrested and sent to jail as a deserter!

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE WORST JOB YET

Friday, September 24th,  
On board S.S. *Mauretania*.

THE chief event of this luxurious passage home has been the suddenness of the shift of my psychological gears from high to low—and reverse—yesterday afternoon. As a matter of fact, it came mighty close to “stripping” them.

One-thirty saw me enjoying all the gastronomical magnificence of Mrs. Mauretania’s French chef—good luck and friends got me on board here in spite of trying for my first-cabin ticket only one day before sailing. Two o’clock found me in old pants and shirt and sweat-rag, shovel in hand, taking lessons in the strenuous art of stoking. Talk about high dives! That was the tallest and quickest dive from tip-top luxury to bottom-scraping hard labor my imagination can picture!

Strenuous and bottom-scraping—these surely are the words! I never knew that even half an hour could be so tragically long, nor the three-minute interval of the gaffer’s shovel on the ship’s steel bottom so disastrously short! The first bangety-bang of that shovel makes you jump to shut off the drafts and swing open the great door of the first—and highest—of the three cavernous furnaces assigned you. With the light of the roaring holocaust burning out your eyes and scorching your forearms, you catch up your shovel and throw pounds and pounds from the floor at your feet into the flames until you have filled up the entire opening. “Let ’em slide off-like, for’rd—there, like that!” Then quick! you drive the great poker into the mass near the grates and lift it carefully so as to help the air through.

Quick again—for every instant of open doors means cold air for the cooling of the water and the lessening of the precious steam—quick, to close doors and turn on blasts, and then on to feed the burning hunger—and feel the fearful heat—of fire number two. At last it is fed, closed, and given the draft—but your heart sinks as the gaffer's shovel bangs it into you that you are losing time! You double your speed on number three and with that done you hurry to open number one again. With your long, heavy rake you put all the strength of your shoulders and front trunk into the work of pushing the coals back toward the far end of the bed. Now you're about even with your job. A short pause, a quick catching of your breath, a dry spitting out of cotton-like coal-dust, the glimpsing of the whites of black-rimmed eyes and of shining sweat streams down the blackened faces of your fellows moving through the dust-filled darkness, and then again the bangety-bang of the gaffer's signal. Again the heat on eyes and face and arms, and again the shovel, remembering to use your back-swing to give it distance, and then to let it slide off "easy-like," without pushing the shovel too high.

"Allus keep 'er pushed back, with a good body—about four inches from the top—that's wot gets us into port. There, she's just right," your buddy yells into your ear above the noise.

"Come on, now—wot's the idea? A little more sweat there now on the rake," calls the gaffer to a group of black, sweat-striped backs.

"Gangway! Gangway!" shouts the trimmer as he emerges from the dusty blackness of the bunkers.

"Clangety-clang!" summons the gaffer's signal.

"More coal!" roars out of the open door of fire number two.

"Wha-n-g!" whines your shovel on the ship's steel floor before it gets its load.



After hardly an hour of such muscular effort as I think I never experienced before I was almost finished.

Shortly the fire had to be "drawn." That meant getting the hot coals all to one side, then raking down to the front the huge clinkers; some of them were bigger than the door and so had to be broken with the poker. With one foot upon the pile of hot clinkers already fallen on the floor, you put your whole back and body into bringing the others down to the mouth after you have swung the great rake as far back as it will go. Then you spread your fire over the grates, and then again more coal. Later the ashes, still hot at your feet, must be shovelled into the mechanical ejector, for carrying to the boat's side and out into the water.

It was a shameful moment when finally I had to ask for transfer to the trimmer's job for fear that my first week on shore would be in bed. The difference is hardly as great as might be wished. Somehow or other the heavy wheelbarrow has to be got into the narrow place where the curved ribs and side of the boat make awkward pockets in which the shovelling of coal is extremely difficult. You can scarcely see your buddy a few feet away for the black dust. Then the iron barrow must be pushed out onto the floor of the fire-room. With a run and a yell you use your skill to overend the heavy load at precisely the right spot for the fireman to find his pile.

On either job there is a good deal of air from the ventilators if you stand exactly at the right place beneath the ventilators. But elsewhere—especially before the open doors or near the hot ashes—phew!

"If ye find it 'ot 'ere ye should come with me of a nice summer's dye down to the Red Sea, where there's never a breath of a breeze. Twenty-eight year I've 'ad of this, and I'm tellin' ye, this is the coolest and comfortablest yet! Twenty-eight year and seven times over the seven seas and

all! Only once on an oil-burner—with a 'ard time tryin' to keep awake."

The most comfortable sensation enjoyed in years came from the cool air of the deck, after what seemed miles of ladders to the showers of the second cabin, before daring to show my face back in the first cabin. Burns of arms and face and hands, also of the foot which got against the huge poker on the floor, will keep me in remembrance of the afternoon for quite some time—to say nothing of dead-tired muscles all over my body. Luckily, the labor did not bring "the bends." These are the bane of the fireman's life. When their sudden knotting of the muscles across the stomach follows suddenly on that back-breaking pull-down upon the rake, men are said to fall and writhe in agony on the floor, insensible to the lesser pains of all the burns inflicted by the red-hot ashes.

To-day I hardly knew whether to feel glad or mad as the result of my further study of this worst of jobs. Back among the stokers I inquired this afternoon how they can stand such fierce exertion, even for the four hours on and the eight hours off. Here's the answer:

"Wull, if a mon goes along with the gang, as 'e should, 'e cawn't lawst. What yer do is ter do number one fire with yer coal and all. Then yer opens up number two, like this, ye see? There ye are, ready, like. Then yer tikes a look to see if the gaffer's lookin'. Like as not 'e eyen't. Then yer close up number two door and thot's done! Then yer opens up number three and if Mr. Gaffer's not lookin', yer slams 'er shut and turns on the air 'ard, like, and then yer through—awnd witin' on the leader's shovel. Course yesterday yer couldn't do thot 'cause yer mon was the only one of the boat as tikes 'is three fires regular like. The best fireman on the boat, 'e is, we'll all sye, though 'e eyen't 'ad a sober dye on land in twenty year.

“Wull, o’ course we trimmers, wull, our job would be bad—lookin’ after six firemen—if it wasn’t that they eyen’t goin’ through full, like ’e syes to yer. Then, too, if they ’as British coal it’s bad, but on Yankee coal—thot’s better—that is, better for us, y’ understawnd?—because the bloo-ody stuff’s got dirt in it—it won’t burn, so it lawsts longer!

“Yes, on American boats they’re ‘found’ in towels and soap with bed-linen weekly, with shower-baths and good food. ’Ere yer furnishes yer own soap and towels, and knife and fork, and so on—a steward ’as just swiped an outfit for me from the third class—mine bein’ missin’, y’ understawnd? Worst of all, yer fights ’ere for yer food. They brings it on in one big dish, y’ see, and the best getter gets it. Yer gets a big fine, too, for bringin’ booze on board—or a knife or a pistol. And yer gets two days off and five bob for talkin’ back to an engineer, to say nothin’ of twenty pounds and two or three months for jumpin’ a boat before the voyage is ended—and ye’re caught the minute ye gets back on the next trip, and yer can’t get onto another boat without yer book givin’ the years of yer service and all. And yer can’t get that from yer company except when yer gets back from yer trip. So how to get onto another job in any other country, I don’t know.”

Among them was a chap whose hand was the most awful collection of burns, blisters, and yellow sores my eyes have ever seen. Ever since the dreadful sight my own hand has been all but twitching and my shoulders contracting at the memory of it. That’s because once yesterday I started to pick up what looked like a perfectly cold—because perfectly black—poker. Luckily a yell from a friend gave warning. Since then I had thought that even at the worst I could have dropped it too quickly to have received any serious burn. My friend this afternoon lifted his dreadful hand to give a fearful testimony:

"Drop it? O' course I tried to drop the bloo-ody poker! But I couldn't! The bleedin' thing 'ad burned so far into me 'and that all the fat of me stuck to it and 'eld it there a-burnin' all the bloo-ody w'ile! My God, 'twas awful! Now I'm laid off and two others 'ave to 'do a deuce' for it. Each of them, y' see, does six hours instead of four—and not a penny extra for it, either."

Those were, perhaps, the two I saw stripped in the showers and all but dead to the world with their fatigue after their six hours.

And there are 250 of these men on board—less than usual because one of our four huge funnels, with its six boilers and their forty-eight fires is not working—conjuring up the steam required to take all these tons and tons of ease and comfort into port. No wonder that men are anxious to see the oil-burners come in, even though that some of my friends will wonder "w'ere the bloo-ody 'ell's a mon's goin' to get a job, eh?" For some, the first news of the new burners will mean a drinking bout—the drinking bout which follows hard upon either good news or bad, unpleasant anticipations or otherwise:

"The first time in a long time it was thot I was droonk. Well, y' see, the 'ole blinkin' voyage yer cawn't drink nothin'. Then yer gets on shore and yer wants ter buy somethin' fine fer the wife and yer cawn't do as well for 'er as ye'd like. So yer ends oop by mikin' a bloo-ody beast of yerself—awnd in the mornin' all yer money's gone!"

Well, if I were to land at home after days and weeks of such work—perhaps with such a hand and the memory of that poker sticking tight to it—that horrible poker that would not drop!—I wonder what I'd do. Involuntarily my shoulders register uncertainty.

To-morrow there will be the landing—unless, as one of the sailors put it, "unless this bleedin' fog piles us up on

the bloo-ody beach!" What different things that landing will mean to us all—by reason of the different parts of the boat our different jobs have permitted us to occupy!

For one worker—the imposing-looking deck-steward: "This trip 'as been a royal 'oliday. That's because everybody dresses for dinner—and eats it—in the dining-room. That gives us a chawnce to put everything away and get to bed at a fair hour."

Saturday evening, Sept. 25th,  
New York City.

What prosperous people these Americans appear to be! Every shop girl or stenographer must have a week's wages on her back!

How many automobiles there are in the world! All day I've been scared for my life every time I've crossed the street. No wonder many of them have the protection of a bumper both at front and back—in line with the incredulous query of a South Wales mine manager.

How rapid the elevators are! It's a wonder that they stop at the top and bottom without a smash.

What a delight it is to telephone with only one coin to be put into the slot!

And not a drunken man or woman to be seen on the streets!

What a Babel of languages is spoken here in between the occasional English—or American!

And how similar are the problems here, according to the taxi-driver from the dock:

"Here's my brother. Helped to make the world safe and all that—and got a bad wound over there. And what does he get for it? Nothin' but a bum job—after leavin' a good one to go."





*PART II*  
**ONE INTERPRETATION**



# ONE INTERPRETATION

## CHAPTER IX

### "FULL UP"

Cleveland, Ohio,  
July, 1921.

THE past few months have been among the most critical in British history. Is there any interpretation of the experiences and testimonies of the foregoing pages which will throw light upon these months, and at the same time help to a better understanding of the more fundamental and permanent factors of both Britain's and America's industrial problems?

Those well-known angels who "fear to tread" in difficult places, fly circles around my pen as I attempt that interpretation after so short a contact with the unskilled laborer in so small a sector of the country's entire industrial front. All I can do is to promise to give to other interpretations the same open-minded considerations which I bespeak for this one.

"Full up!"

These two words supply, in my opinion, the key for understanding modern British life. This modern British life is lived in a crowded country. In this crowded country jobs are scarce.

The summer's ubiquitous "Full up!" was much more than merely the result of the war. For a very long time Britain has been the self-acknowledged land of the narrow margin between the number of available jobs and the number of people who need them for their daily bread and butter. It evidently expects to be so for a long time to come. British life—social and political as well as industrial—is largely what it is to-day as the result of this tra-

ditional condition, this acknowledgment, and this expectation.

"No, sir, yer eyen't got no office-boy, gov'ner!—not unless yer tikes me on—cause 'e's just been runned over!"

The story tells why the ordinary British factory needs no employment office bigger than the gaffer's hat. It is matched by a more recent statement of the same pressure at the other end of the social scale:

"All of us applicants for one of the best 'berths' in the whole civil service—it pays more than 1,000 pounds—had first to go through a sort of oral elimination contest. Certain physical or other obvious defects barred one completely. Lack of a war record was completely insurmountable. If a chap volunteered in September, 1914, he was asked the cause of his delay! A large number, of course, dropped out. Nevertheless there still remained of us who took an examination which required the highest educational and cultural equipment possible to obtain in England, a total of nearly 300!"

"When my engagement to Mr. Asquith was announced," writes the author of the famous diary, "a number of my friends asked me if I did not consider that I was doing a very unsafe thing to marry a man who, though brilliant at the law, was nevertheless entirely dependent for his living upon his earnings."

So also in the world of British business the son who succeeds to the management of the long-established concern is counselled by the same general scarcity of "berths" to a policy of marked conservatism. Otherwise he may endanger the family's inherited guarantee of both their sustenance and their social rank. For still others the same situation, strange as it may seem, makes complete leisure almost imperative.

"You see," explained an American woman whose brother is one of the comparative few with us who find themselves



in somewhat the same situation, “he could not get a business position of the importance required by his social standing without investing rather heavily. But if he did that, then he might lose the whole of his share of our father’s estate. That gives him enough to live on in comfort *provided he does not lose it.*”

It is these various considerations which give the reason for the importance of our philosopher friend’s “Old Gold.” But the old gold thus represented by the possession of a business or of stocks and bonds furnishes more than a guarantee of economic safety and more than a selfish prohibition of work. The appreciation of that universal “Full up!” means that any one who does not need a job ought not to take one. If he does, he thereby lessens by that much the chances of those who do need one. Where, therefore, the old gold is sufficient, the supposedly lucky owner is almost forced into either politics or sport if he would enjoy some sense of distinction in ways worthier than merely by conspicuous expenditure. As a matter of fact the popularity or good-will gained in sport in a sport-loving country may quite easily be capitalized at the polls for the start of a worthy political career.

All these various considerations, also, make it plain enough how he who lacks the old gold of past earning power comes to consider that the family job makes a perfectly good form of property for passing earning power on down to his children, and his children’s children. Thus a successful American ship-builder:

“‘If this berth has been good enough for me for forty years—and for my father before me—I don’t see why it isn’t good enough for you.’ That’s what my father back in Scotland said to me when I told him I wanted to take a chance and try my fortune abroad. I had just passed, at twenty-one, the examination which showed that I could expect to succeed him without difficulty as head of a small

government shipyard. So, in a way, I was a made man. That meant, of course, not only security but a lot of social prestige. As to that, even when I became a foreman a few years earlier, the older men among whom I had grown up as a boy immediately stopped calling me Tom—from that very day it was always ‘Mr.’ And if I had—after that day—asked one of them to ride home with me, I would have lost ‘face’ all over the place. Following my refusal of my father’s job—that was twenty years ago—the old gentleman has never spoken a single word to me!”

Thus from bottom to top a whole people finds it necessary to adjust itself in one way or another to the whip of that “Full up!” As a result—and a far-reaching result—a whole people comes naturally to give its chief attention to security rather than to opportunity. Those who like to “take a chance” it tends to consider not courageous but as foolhardy and almost dangerous citizens. In a word, the whole people combines to make by its universal approvals the greatest of social virtues out of the art—and the science—of “playing safe.”

The *holding* of the job thus comes enormously to exceed in importance the *making* and the development of it. Thus the earning of a living comes to be robbed of the spirit of adventure: it is too serious a matter to permit the pleasures of risk. The satisfaction of the exploit—the thrill of excitement which comes from playing with not too dangerous uncertainties and the exercise of skill and judgment in their handling—these may be found elsewhere, if necessary, but surely not on the job. If you should lose or endanger that, what then?—not only for yourself and your bread and butter, but for your children and your children’s children!

It is this, without doubt, which largely accounts for the national institution of the “bookie.” The winning of that lucky thirty-three to one shot had practically no financial value for my miner friend there in the South Wales “pub”

after he left the course. But it is one of his life's "high spots." Up to the day of his death he will lick the chops of his pride with the sweet pleasure of the homage of his admiring and envious friends and listeners. Here at home we get much the same excitements and the same pleasures. But we get them mainly from our business—our job. With us the day's work is much more of a game. We forget that we are much freer to play this game only because if we lose we are so much freer to find other opportunities to start over again. One of our large institutions for correspondence study has received in the course of a comparatively few years, tuitions totalling more than \$100,000,000! In a very real sense these are the wagers laid down by thousands and thousands of young-men gamblers. But they are gambling on themselves and their own possibilities! The chances are that they are too intent upon this game to care to give much time for the horses, the whippets, the pigeons, or even "the 'ymns."

Likewise in the matter of the nation-wide popularity of John Barleycorn. Bad jobs, with their usual accompaniment of bad living conditions, and with, especially, poor prospects of getting a "jump" or other chance up and out of them into lines guarded by that closed door of the gaffer's "Full up!"—it is these that furnish the source of the thirst of millions of men. It is these that give to John Barleycorn a smiling face in the eyes of millions of the world's least successful workers. For to these he promises those delightful satisfactions of successful exploit which are always hungered for in the hearts of even the lowliest men, but which their jobs refuse. To such as these old Blear-Eyed John promises a delightful short-circuit into exactly that golden age of comfort, self-respect, and achievement which their conditions deny.

"The drunker ye be, the less ye'll be a-mindin' o' the flies and the bugs," according to my near down-and-out

friend of the Northwest's construction camps. "And when ye sober up, ye're used to 'em. See?"

"I just like to drink enough," said old Uncle Zeke, who knew, as long as he was sober, that his best working-days in the steel plant were gone, "I just like to drink enough to get the feelin' of me old position back, like."

From that same fundamental factor also of scarce jobs, chronically scarce jobs, comes that division of "class"—that everlasting "Workin' clawss, we are, ye know!" When you can get, at fourteen or at twenty-one, the job which you can pretty confidently expect—with good luck—to hold on to until you're old and pensioned, then you have the makings of class lines. At least you have the retention of them instead of that destruction of them which might be expected in any industry which offered full opportunity for men to rise in responsibility as rapidly as their abilities and capacities developed. Nothing is more important to understand, and at all times to remember, than this: that among an industrial people social levels—the level of the worker, and particularly the standing of his wife and family in the community—tend to follow job levels. So where the demonstration of ability can be counted upon to bring recognition and the chance at a better job, there a man will always endeavor to finish his industrial career at a social level above that of the stage of entrance. Those who succeed in this are playing the game of the job successfully; they cannot know much about the restrictions of "class," because their developing abilities and their expanding responsibilities cause their "class" from year to year, or decade to decade, to change!

Education will, of course, have much to do with the ability of such men to expand their powers as rapidly as the job may require. But we undoubtedly assign too great an importance to the schools when we assume that differences of education are, in themselves and alone, mainly



responsible for the ordinary differences of "class." Educational facilities have to depend for their effectiveness upon their use. They will not be used if their users find no "berth" which permits the practical—and the properly recognized—application of the newly developed abilities. This depends upon the width or narrowness of that margin between the number of jobs and the number of persons who need them.

In the same way this same national margin must be kept constantly in mind in trying to understand the part played by the labor unions. He confuses results with causes who considers them the most important and compelling part of modern British industry. They are, perhaps, the most outstanding. They do, perhaps, try to exert too strong a pressure in certain directions. But, after all is said and done, they must be seen as organized agencies by which the worker aims to adapt himself to that scarcity of the job, and to that scarcity of both social and industrial opportunity which follows close upon it. Finding the job and then holding it against the possibility of all arbitrary tyranny—the prime importance of at least these two services of the union is driven home into men's very souls every time the gaffer shrugs his shoulder and utters that dreadful but decisive "Full up!"

But these two functions of the union are only the beginning. At every stage the worker—like everybody else—is facing the question of method raised by his self-respect: "You wish, of course, to 'get on' and 'count' and be somebody if at all possible. All right. But *how*? Will you try it by yourself or with your fellow workers? Will you go it alone or with your trade, your class, or, in short, your union?" Ordinarily the man who finds the going good "on his own" seldom feels the necessity of joining his group, even though he has to meet the heavy pressure exerted to obtain his class loyalty. Where, however, jobs



are so scarce that it is over-risky to leave one place in the hope of a better, then the only elevator up is likely to appear the one which his group, or class, is able to organize. Thus the craft or trade-union develops for maintaining the industrial and social status of the steamfitters, for instance, in comparison with the electrical workers, and for advancing the standing of them both in comparison with all the rest of us.

The nation-wide acceptance of the British union can, therefore, be seen as a practical acknowledgment of the lessened opportunity of the individual. Only one form of opposition to these group, or class stairways will, in the long run, succeed in directing into other channels the huge pressure of men's wish to believe in themselves and their individual worth—their increasing individual worth. That is the form which arranges to furnish so large a measure of opportunity to each individual, as an individual, as to make him unwilling to accept the mass measures of the union at the price asked.

In the same way, also, the causes of wide-spread restriction of output go down deep, not simply into unionism, but to the more fundamental conditions which call forth the desire for unionism and its works. Let a man live for years under the daily pressure of that narrow margin between job and no job, let him observe, day after day, that when some men work it appears to mean that for exactly that reason other men cannot work, then the most important factor in his whole life is sure to be the conviction that there simply isn't enough work to go 'round. To us it may seem very selfish that such a man is unwilling, under the circumstances, to give himself the satisfaction of a good day's work. Personally I am sure that the average worker would rather have that satisfaction every night than to carry home his dinner pail with the knowledge that he has spent his day in shirking. The ambitious but unhappy

worker at the gate of the Woolwich arsenal is only one among scores of others whom I can recall in both countries. The trouble is that, especially in Britain, but also, to an enormously greater extent than ought to be true, in America, the worker has been taught by his own sad experience to consider that such spiritual satisfaction for himself may rob some other fellow worker of his very bread and butter!

Still further, and finally, it is that same "Full up!" which makes the craft strike an extremely costly tool for the holding of established class or trade advantages, or the gaining of new ones. In the nature of the case, the strike's seriousness to the worker increases very rapidly where the margin of living is already very narrow in his particular field, and more or less non-existent in other related lines into which he might beat a retreat. This means that these narrow-margin workers will make great effort to strengthen themselves by amalgamation with their friends who possess both the wider margins and the greater influence of more skilled jobs. It also means that in a country of narrow margins such an amalgamation will try to save the cost of the strike wherever possible by developing the power of its political influence.

It is necessary, as we have seen, to have this latter development very much in mind in order to understand the setting of the present stage of British industry. Doubtless it is even more necessary to keep it in mind in connection with the near future. But before discussing that we ought to ask this question:

"If these various considerations have followed upon the gradual lessening of industrial opportunity under the pressure of the gaffer's 'Full up!' during the course of many years, what has happened to give this chronic situation so acute a phase at this particular time?"

## CHAPTER X

### "FED UP!"

THE answer to that question appears to me to be this:

The British citizen in general—also the British worker in particular—is tired. Tired and therefore touchy—dangerously touchy—"Fed up!"

This condition is due partly to the long continuance, in certain districts, of such living conditions as Glasgow's. These, in turn, are one result of the country's age. Buildings erected a hundred years ago in a growing city are more difficult of renovation than we Americans find it easy to understand. Ancient working conditions, likewise, in industries operated for generations are not easily replaced with up-to-date arrangements. The same pressure of the scanty job which holds a man to a "berth" in spite of its bad conditions, holds him also to the same tenement—all the unhappier, perhaps, at the thought of his luckier friends employed in one of the country's garden-factory-cities. Upon such a worker the ease of access to the sport fields, or the attractive meadows surrounding the average town or small city is a moderating influence of great importance. The influence of the "pub" and its position as the social centre of the community is, on the whole, distinctly bad.

Between the condition of our muscles and the moral convictions of our "mentals" a very close connection is continuously maintained by those ever-present and ever-active *liaison officers* known as our feelings. As the result of their efforts we should expect that the physical conditions under which a considerable proportion of Britain's unskilled workers live and work would induce moral convictions more

or less antagonistic if not revolutionary. During the course of years and decades, however, the depressed groups born and raised into the manifest fixedness of their condition, and dulled by the dreary and deceptive ministrations of John Barleycorn, would probably grow less and less articulate. Such groups would require something in the nature of a crisis to bring their misery into any unmistakable form of utterance.

The war has furnished this crisis.

Its strains have come in every plane, physical, mental, and spiritual. These have brought the usual result of "Tiredness and Temper." As might be expected, this "T and T," or "T 'n' T," has demonstrated its usual pressure toward some explosive outlet. The outbreaks of unrest and of disorder have been the result.

One great spiritual barrier between America and Europe is that we have found it so difficult to comprehend the intensity of the "Great Fatigue." This is undoubtedly among the most important spiritual factors in the whole present European situation. To be sure, we have ourselves experienced an extreme "let-down" from the high elations of our great enterprise—a let-down which shows itself in practically every department of our living. Nevertheless, it is certain that we have largely failed to appreciate the full intensity of the war weariness which has followed from the strains of the war upon peoples for whom it was not only much longer but also infinitely more serious and vital than for us.

The colossal physical strains of the long years of conflict and the spiritual elations required for enduring them, these together have set the stage for nation-wide—yes, world-wide—disappointment and unhappiness. By millions the fighters of the victorious nations came home to enjoy the blessings of peaceful and, therefore, presumably, of normal, comfortable life. Almost everywhere the post-armistice



political campaigns promised that comfort, improvement, and general amelioration which, in the hearts of all, was required to make the world worth all the blood which had been shed to save it. Every country was to be made "fit for heroes to live in." So we all, as it were, turned down the covers preparatory to the first good snooze in years, anticipating our waking in the new era of our war-bought aspirations. And then it happened! Just at that very moment our weary ears were assailed with the wailings and waulings of those unruly war babies known as the high cost of living, dislocated and demoralized economic statuses and relationships, perplexed statesmen, puzzled leaders, and, finally, to cap the climax, millions of balky buyers!

The Great Peace has brought not peace but a mass of social, political, and economic problems of such a breadth and depth and height as the civilized world has never seen before. Those problems require for their solution wider information, broader experience, and deeper sympathy than has ever been given to the most thoughtful citizen or the most experienced statesman. That in itself would be bad enough. What is much worse is this: the problems brought us by the Great Peace have to be solved with the depleted physical, moral, and spiritual strength left us by the Great War. New and unexpected difficulties and obstructions have been piled upon the older ones. The unwonted and misunderstood wearinesses and weaknesses of the war have been piled high upon the weaknesses and wearinesses of generations. In Britain hundreds of thousands of those young men who have been regularly trained and counted upon to play their part in working difficult things out, have never yet returned from the day they marched off as volunteers to death! The situation, surely, is enough to try men's patience. Yes, and to break it!

So it is not strange if that "pressure from beneath," which is exerted by millions of workers in such a time and



in such a mood, comes to have, in Britain, a cutting edge—or, perhaps better, a needle-point which has threatened to prick the delicate fabric of the whole great dirigible of the nation's life.

For exactly this threat came in the form of the great coal strike. The lengths to which that ever-present pressure from beneath may go when the mood of men is bad, was never better demonstrated than by the unwillingness of the strikers—against the advice of their leaders—to allow the manning of the mine pumps. That meant that they were desperately willing to run the risk of ruining not only their country's but their own means of livelihood. As might be expected, my buddies and fellow workers in the Rhondda mine figured conspicuously in the cabled accounts of the assaults made on the volunteers sent in to serve the pumps.

That strike has finally been settled, not by nationalization but by recourse to "standard wages, standard profits, and profit-sharing"—phrases of which much more is likely to be heard in future. But the pressure of the lower part of the British working world has by no means been completely relieved. "Bob" Smillie would doubtless say again, as before, that it is still "a race between socialism and revolution," not to mention the established order as another contestant. The question is, can the pressure which arises out of men's moods under the compulsions of that chronic "Full up!" be given in these critical and acute "Fed up!" days an outlet sufficient to avoid explosion?

"Aye, we moost 'ave order," one of my miner friends used to say. His mood represents the traditional tendency of the Briton. This traditional view-point can be expected to stand strain far beyond the point where other workers might blow up. On the other hand, there is at the moment of writing a new danger factor. That is the joblessness of millions of British workers. This, as I well know, is capable

of driving the most conservative of men into desperation through the deadliness of its demoralization—its daily, cumulative demoralization. Still further, this joblessness takes away from the worker the use of his usual industrial tool of the strike. It accordingly favors the use of political instruments—and more than a few of the labor leaders are convinced that even these are too cumbersome for getting the relief demanded by workers who are too fagged and “Fed up” to be squeamish about method.

On the whole, however, revolution is hardly likely, at least for the present. Of course it is quite conceivable that such an acute situation will result in putting the Labor party in power. But that is a much less extreme matter than we in America are apt to assume. With such a man as Arthur Henderson or J. H. Thomas for its Prime Minister any sudden modification of social or economic policy is hardly to be expected.

The real question is: “After the Labor party, what?”

For undoubtedly the millions who exert that pressure from beneath will be disappointed by what the Labor party’s leaders will be able quickly to accomplish in remodelling the complicated situation of these present days into something nearer to the heart’s desire of the nation. Those who have never carried responsibility for solving great problems generally assume that the possession of the power is all that is needed. They have seen the government make the wheels of the whole country go round for the successful winning of the war. They are convinced that Lloyd George and his associates possess to-day all the power for the curing of the country’s ills. The difficulty is that the hands of these are withheld from the act of curing because their own personal selfishness and greed are served by this withholding. Disappointment is, accordingly, sure to come when the workers put their leaders into full position to apply their sympathetic hands for the sovereign

cure and then behold them, for some strange reason, hesitant—with the ills of high cost of living, unemployment, etc., still persisting! In such a case I can hear my friends saying over their beer: "A fair wash-out they are—like all the rest of 'um! Speakin' us fine words till they get their canes and their fine clothes and all, and then forgettin' of us!"

"True enough," will then come the answer of the extremists and the revolutionists. "They've let you down, all right. Now give *us* the chance!"

The worker's answer to that appeal will depend not so much upon his thinking as upon his feeling at the moment—upon his mood. That mood, in turn, will depend upon the ability of the leaders of the present and the early future—whether they are of the Labor Party or of the present government—to assuage by degrees the acuteness of that dangerous "Fed up" spirit and to direct its pressure into constructive channels for the betterment of the life of all the country's workers. This, it appears to me, can only be accomplished by lessening in some way the pressure of that everlasting "Full up!"

With hardly a moment's hesitation the great majority of Britain's labor leaders and also of its "intellectuals" would reply that there is only one way to do this: either eliminate entirely or enormously restrict the possibility of private profit. According to a few, one way to do this would be by means of the guild socialism which would organize the different fields of commerce and industry into a democracy practically free from the "mawster" and his profits. According to more, the better way is to so enlarge the powers of government in combination with the workers as to eliminate the present inequalities due to capitalism, and at the same time avoid the wastes and inefficiencies of ordinary bureaucratic control.

Such weeks as those already described make it very easy

for any one to sympathize with those who feel that the established arrangement of matters social and industrial in Britain must somehow be made to show improvement on behalf of millions of humans—huge improvement. At the same time the same short weeks make an observer wonder whether those who hope and work for radical change are not too close to see fully the complications introduced into the problem by two considerations—two considerations which appear to a visitor particularly to distinguish the industrial situation in Great Britain.

## CHAPTER XI

### HOW MANY JOBS TO A NATION?

OF these two considerations the first is this: Within the last few years the socialization of the job by means of the socialization of the state has become more a matter of international relations and policy than of national.

This has special bearing on the case of Great Britain. It is only necessary to live where jobs are scarce in order to learn that the job is one of the realest and most vital forms of property. Those who live where this appreciation is general come altogether easily to the belief that government should concern itself immensely more with the property of jobs—with wages, hours, and other job conditions—and immensely less with the property of bricks and acres, stocks and contracts. There on the job is where most men live—especially those whose most compelling fact is the narrowness of their money margin. It must be said that the law-makers find it difficult to meet the workers there. These, on the other hand, find it very difficult to see any connection between their pay envelopes and the country's commissioner of commerce at the capital, or its ambassador abroad—matters which appear of so much concern to the law-makers. Nevertheless, it is to-day impossible to talk about the maintenance of jobs, and of the conditions of living which depend upon them, without keeping in mind, at the same time, the exigencies of commercial competition with other nations. Thus labor and government come in these present days to have about as much trouble understanding each other as labor and capital.

“Before the war it cost in wages 6s. 11d. to produce a



ton of coal," said Lloyd George to the British people, in the effort to convince them that the wages and profits mentioned by the miners are not constants like "a" or "b," but highly undependable and uncertain "x's" in the equation of the nation's jobs and economics, and therefore of its government. "Last year it cost 25s. 9d. in wages to produce a ton, and by February that had gone up to 27s. That is, it costs four times as much in wages to produce a ton as it did before the war. That does not mean that the wages have gone up four times, but that the output per man has come down. Before the war one man would turn out in a day twenty-one hundredweight. Last year one man turned out fifteen and one-half hundredweight. Think of that over hundreds of thousands of men—increased wages, diminished hours, diminished output, impaired efficiency, costs all around going up. How can we compete in the markets of the world with that going on? For one reason and another the output in America has gone up, very largely due to improved machinery and to the fact that the coal seams in America are very much thicker than ours. You cannot use machinery in our coal pits that you can use in some of the American pits. That makes it more incumbent that we should do everything to reduce the cost in this country. It is our only chance."

It is easy for the worker to believe that he would have a steady job every day if only the present system did not make it to the "mawster's" interest occasionally to close down his plant in order to let consumption catch up with production. Following that it is still easier to make "the great assumption"—namely, that when private profit is taken out of industry by means of government operation, then all motive and all cause for unemployment ceases. Unfortunately, however, the question remains for the government or for the private manager: "Can coal be raised in South Wales on a basis which will permit, first, successful

competition with other coal in the world's markets, and second, a fairly normal and comfortable life to the miner?"

The answer need not necessarily be a matter of wages and hours. That is a national or even a local affair. It *must*, however, be a question of something quite different, namely of *wages per ton*—of *labor costs per unit of production*. That is not only a matter of international interest, but of the most vital national and local importance. There is, to be sure, one way in which the disagreeable compulsions of this situation can be avoided. That is by seeing to it that all the competing nations arrange to socialize, or, as it were, "de-profit-ize" themselves at the same time, and so adapt their various relationships upon the basis entirely of service. As long as the prospects for this are as remote as they appear at the present moment, the disagreeable fact remains that domestic operation must depend upon international competition as determined, in turn, by that tyrannical factor of wages per ton. And that has now everywhere become, like modern warfare, a matter of the organization of pretty much the entire resources of the nation. So the covering of those bottoms leaving the South Wales ports may demand the strength, the good-will, and the intelligence not only of the country's miners, owners, and managers, but also of the nation's inventors, economists, psychologists, philosophers, and statesmen.

The successful meeting of this vital challenge is undoubtedly aided by the co-operative movement. This is now said to serve something like a third of the population, and doubtless increases to a definite extent the buying power of the wage dollar. On the other hand, the challenge is not in the least dodged or lessened in the long run by the national institution of unemployment insurance. As has only recently been demonstrated, the whole of British industry comes to a halt shortly after its exports become no longer salable abroad. With British industry halted, the income

for the paying of the unemployment "doles" comes shortly to an end. Neither employer, employee, nor government can pay its share. At the same time it is conceivable that the plan may help to get from all these interested parties the attention needed for solving the real problem—the problem, namely, of increasing the number of jobs—regular jobs.

Definite steps in this direction of lowering production and distribution costs are said to be receiving the attention of the country. These include the projected tunnel under the English Channel, plans for obtaining cheap power from the tides of Bristol Bay, from the watercourses of Scotland and other parts of the country, and the "Cross Canal" for connecting practically all parts of industrial England. It is quite conceivable, also, that the government might plan early and extensive developments for transforming coal into electric power at or near pit-head, in line with the proposals of the Labor party.

But it must be said that any government is pretty sure to find the early future unfriendly to these proposals, however helpful they may prove in the long run to the reduction of unit costs. For such projects are sure to call for additional increases in budgets already staggering. My weeks in the mine town made me feel certain that such expenditures would be a long time in appealing to the workers and their pockets, even though their value might be apparent to their party leaders.

For the most part, accordingly, the number of British jobs will have to depend upon the condition of British industry as a whole. That, in turn, must depend almost entirely upon the opportunities for British sales in the markets of the world. The real question then remains as before, whether these sales can be best advanced by means of the governmental or the private operation of such basic industries as coal, transportation, etc.

The second consideration stands in the way of success by the first of these methods and to a less extent in the way of success by the second. It is this: All groups of people in Britain seem still to accept and practise the old "lump of labor" theory as propounded by the early English economists. The whole British public, that is, tends to assume that in any country the number of jobs must, in the nature of the case, be definitely limited and fixed—must be an "a" or a "b" instead of an "x." This backs up that manifest "Full up!" and provides the social justification of the leisure class, and of the division between one's real interests and one's job. It also helps to the more or less general practice and acceptance of the idea of the restriction of output. Following close upon all this goes what might be called the "lump of trade" idea—that the business of the world also runs within strictly limited boundaries. Thus a certain distributor encountered a great deal of opposition to his establishing a distribution centre in London. It was assumed that his entry would subtract just exactly that much business from those already there. As a matter of fact, by the exhibition of an amazing amount of imagination in creating new wants in the minds of the district's buyers he felt that he had considerably increased their total expenditures not only for the benefit of himself but also of his competitors.

To be sure, this traditional "lump of labor" theory is substantiated by the fixedness of class lines. For a most serious factor of this fixedness is that it comes to mean a fixedness of class ability to develop wants and needs, and, therefore, to consume goods. Nothing is more certain than that the consumer is after all the employer of the employer and all his employees. The number of a country's jobs, accordingly, becomes in a considerable degree fixed and limited the moment the consumptive power is fixed for any large number of its inhabitants. In addition to this eco-



conomic evil of "class" a serious count of the same sort can be made against John Barleycorn. Without doubt he serves immensely to prevent that expansion of consumptive power which might otherwise normally be expected to follow upon the increased earning power and purchasing power which has come to the British worker as the result of the war.

The vicious circle of all this is given a still further twist by that national approval of playing safe—of *holding* jobs. One of the forms of this is the wide-spread overvaluation of experience as compared with study. This results in building a wall of discouragement to keep out those who might try to get onto the job by the paths of scientific training. This discouragement of the scientific view-point, when taken into consideration with the non-expanding wants of great groups, thus produces in actuality a situation which appears thoroughly to justify the theory of the fixedness of jobs and opportunity.

Increasing the skill of the manager and the inventor through better technical and commercial education would appear one real way of breaking the hold of that vicious circle. Luckily more and more of the country's young men are entering the technical schools, and more and more of the university-bred men are entering business. If the universities could introduce more courses for the psychology of trade and its relationships, a very real gain would doubtless be made. For the graduates of such courses would wish to do more than simply maintain the industrial enterprise in the same conditions and within the same limits as inherited. That would mean taking a risk—setting at naught the national insistence upon security. But the enjoyment of that risk would be necessary in order to make life interesting to the young man who came into the factory or office with a full quota of technical training or practical psychology itching for application. In the face of



urgent national necessity the unions would also doubtless show reasonable willingness to relax their present restrictions.

Without doubt, further greatly increased scientific attention could well be paid to increasing the country's ability to raise food—and so to increase those seven millions now fed by the country's agriculture. Just what has become of Lloyd George's original efforts to attack this problem by increasing land values and land taxes, nobody seems fully to understand. It is doubtless one of the larger casualties of the war.

Perhaps the most valuable of the results following upon such steps would be the lessened pressure for jobs and the consequently greater opportunity for the public to see how their number may be affected by planning. Such observation might help displace the old idea of their fixedness. Such displacement appears to me of the highest importance not only to the maintenance of a proper standard of living for Britain's workers, but also to nothing less than the peace of the world.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE DOMESTIC PAY ENVELOPE AND "INTERNATIONAL CREATIVE EVOLUTION"

THE British nation has secured its commercial pre-eminence mainly by means of its ability to compete successfully in the international market. This has come largely, in turn, from the world-wide investment of British capital. International financing has greatly helped to the indispensable international selling. Without doubt, also, a very considerable factor has come from the low price of British goods, gained largely by the low wages paid British labor.

That cheapness has heretofore made it largely unnecessary for the British manufacturer to cut corners in costs per ton by means of either scientific production or scientific distribution. The war has now put an end to cheap British labor. All the force of the British workers has been strongly organized to make effective resistance toward any attempt to maintain British goods in world markets by means of a return to the cheap British labor of pre-war times. The question of continuing in foreign world markets by means of low unit costs together with high daily wages presents, therefore, to the British nation one of the most serious situations it has ever known. One of its university philosophers has lately said that within a hundred years or so England would be a clean, smokeless, residential district, to which the successful employers and officials of the provinces would retire. The manufacturers of goods and the working population would have left England and gone out to the colonies for their raw materials. After the reduction and fabrication of these into the goods of commerce, they

would be shipped directly to the point of need. Word comes from England at this moment that the necessity of exporting a considerable part of the population is already receiving more serious attention than ever before. This in itself is made more than ordinarily difficult as the result of the high cost of ships—and therefore of transportation, following the high cost of labor. Unfortunately, too, the colonies as well as practically every other part of the world, are equally afflicted just now with unemployment.

But we must not here be led off into discussing the far future, nor into too close a consideration of the present and more or less transitory phase of unemployment in both Great Britain and the rest of the world. Doubtless within a year or two the present general unemployment will pass. Even after that, however, Great Britain will continue to be a land of scarce jobs, and also, probably, a land where the lump of labor and the lump of trade theory will be at the base of much of the country's thought about itself and its international competitors.

It is not too much to say that the peace of the world will be a difficult matter unless this idea of the fixed limitation of the number of jobs can somehow be robbed of its intensity not only in Great Britain but in other countries of Europe. This can probably only be accomplished by a substitution. Such a substitution would put in the place of the lump of labor and the lump of trade ideas the philosophy of what might be called "Creative Evolution in Business." This philosophy would propose that there can be no fixed and limited number of jobs in the world, and therefore in any nation, simply because there can be no fixed and limited number of human needs and human demands for goods and services. To increase industrial jobs, it is only necessary to make sure to allow the free development of human needs. An industrially crowded country, accordingly, is not a matter of too many people per square mile,

but rather too many potential producers in comparison with the consumption powers of the accessible local or foreign markets.

Who can say that 1930 may not see the development of some now unknown field which, like the motor industry, will satisfy an entirely new human need and give jobs to its thousands and tens of thousands? Who knows but that the masses of China or the islands of the sea may, ten years from now, consume millions of pounds sterling of goods which, though perfectly familiar to us to-day, are yet perfectly unheard of by them, or at least quite definitely outside their present powers of consumption.

If this is true, then any people has much to do if it is to make sure that the consumptive powers of all its groups are constantly helped to enlarge up to the limits permitted by that indispensable competitive cost per ton, and by the equally insistent need of cheap capital to be obtained from their savings. In addition, every people through its government or otherwise, must give close attention to the conservation of its natural resources. For these provide, to a great extent, the natural reservoir out of which the nation digs its jobs. Still further, it will be forced to give close attention to its relations with the outer world. Otherwise it will be unable to put its industries into effective contact with either those fully developed nations or with those hinterland peoples of the world which, from year to year, emerge at the margin of interests and demands which favor their consumption of modern machine-made goods.

Such an evolving demand must, of course, be met by constantly increased scientific operation and scientific management unless the competitive success is to be won merely by cheap labor. That alternative is, by all means, to be avoided. In the nature of the case, it has to be paid for in terms of the decreased consumption powers of the local or domestic working millions.

All this will not at all prevent increased competition among the nations, but such increased competition will find itself in contact with constantly larger and larger markets built up by constantly increased human needs. As long as the maximum of such needs is in a position to express itself, a successful competitor might easily succeed either in developing new demands, or in cheapening his products to new levels of availability. This would, perhaps, mean not a lessening but an increase of the business of others. Internally, accordingly, each people will have the responsibility of advancing the general well-being by seeing that within the national area the results of the evolving maximum of needs are shared with the maximum of fairness between producers, distributors, and consumers at all points of the circle. The moment the interests of any of these are unfairly affected the interests of all are bound to suffer. It is entirely conceivable that something like "standard wage, standard profit, and profit-sharing" will be found to assist effectively toward such fairness. A variety of plans for fuller co-operation between the different groups could be named. In any event, when such fairness has been obtained, the process of the creative evolution becomes a circle beneficent at every point—more buying power for the masses, more demands for goods, more jobs, more skill for permitting low labor costs without low wages, cheaper products, more buying power, more demands, etc., etc.

At present the tendency of governments to build up navies opposes all this. It is assumed that these navies serve their purpose only when the situation becomes acute—that they are more or less useless until their guns are fired. As a matter of fact, the mere existence of those guns is utilized for its psychological power from day to day to back up the interests of the country's producers and distributors in foreign markets. The moment, then, that a nation's ability to meet international competition becomes en-



dangered, whether through the lack of properly scientific processes of production or distribution, the tendency is constantly to depend more and more upon the psychological assistance of armaments. Quite naturally, therefore, the next world war will be a war for jobs—unless the world can somehow cease to consider that the number of jobs is definitely fixed and limited.

The great opportunity, therefore, for the League of Nations—or its substitute—is to provide a means whereby to help develop the needs of the various races, and then to aid in making the circle of their satisfaction through the industries of their own or other countries as universally fair and beneficent as possible. If it did nothing more than gather and distribute, on a world-wide basis, information regarding the needs, the resources, and the capacities of the different parts of the complex world circle of needers and servers, it would become indispensable, for this of itself would serve enormously to develop those international services which are only the reverse side of international needs. Such information and the resultant adjustment of services and benefits might of itself suffice to develop such understandings as would prevent the need of protecting jobs by killing off or “hog-tying” competitors with the help of cannon.

Even such an information service would also make it enormously easier than now for all of us to see that the circle of unlimited creative evolution means that the well-being—the maximum well-being—of every nation is a matter of genuine concern to every other nation. The cancelled automobile orders from Great Britain brought the first “lay-offs” for America’s workers in Detroit and Cleveland in the fall of 1920. Those cancellations followed directly upon the lowered value of the pound sterling. This in turn was one direct result of the unhappiness of my miner friends in South Wales. Every country is now on the

watch against the admittance of the Bolshevik agitator. But he does no harm unless he finds an audience among great groups of listeners who are "fair oon'appy," as in the Rhondda mining town. The roof of Great Britain cannot suffer the cracks and strains produced by those revolutionary songs of my miner friends on "the bottom" without threatening the jobs of American workers. And nothing threatens the normal current of men's thinking and convictions so much as the threatening of their jobs. No one knows at this moment how many months of unemployment in America will be required before millions of men may get into that same dangerous "Fed up!" mood. In every part of the world the workers here must have consumers there. For ourselves it is said that our productive capacities, increased as they have been by the war, cannot be fully occupied unless fully 20 per cent of our output is exported. "British Strike's End Helps Cotton Here. Final Prices Show Gain of 19-31 Points," according to a Wall Street head-line of June 29.

The labor problem has thus become before our eyes a problem of the relations no longer between the employees, the employers, and the public within the national unit, but instead a problem of the relations between producers, distributors, and consumers located and expressing themselves and their needs throughout the whole world circle. Unless these relations are maintained from month to month and year to year by that highly fragile twine of international understanding, the hold of the huskiest palm upon the heaviest shovel in the most remote ditch must be loosened. There can to-day, therefore, be no understanding of the essentials of the labor problem except as we see it in terms of the international conditions which favor the increased development of world-wide human well-being. That, and that alone, is bound to bring with it that development of increased human needs which is indispensable to the de-

velopment of increased facilities of production and distribution for meeting them—in other words, of jobs.

The complexity of this new phase of not only world commerce but of domestic commerce as well has been deposited upon the door-step not only of the ordinary modern factory but also of the ordinary modern home. It is enough to perplex the most intelligent of statesmen, political or industrial. It is hardly to be solved simply by the laborers taking over full responsibility for the solution. Not at least as long as the average working man—as also, for that matter, the average college graduate—sympathizes so thoroughly with the complaint of my Glasgow friend: “W’y should we bother with exchyng? W’y not let every nation have its francs or its dollars and we ’ave our pounds and pence—and everybody go his own wye and be ’appy?” As a matter of fact, I believe the American worker has a much greater desire to share the satisfactions of the steady and self-respecting properly appreciated job than he has to share the management of the enterprise that gives the job. The British worker, being more unhappy with his job and its chances, feels more generally that the only way to obtain the larger satisfaction of the steady job is for him to displace the inefficient capitalist manager. On the whole, it is my belief that the average American worker would come closer to succeeding on the job of management than would the British worker of the same or corresponding status. On the other hand, I am perfectly sure that both would exhibit amazing progress in their ability to handle increased responsibility if given now a larger opportunity to share the satisfactions of the daily job and its doing. Such a gradual development of responsibility is more likely to furnish a practicable way of advance because its progress and its speed will depend upon the ability of both managers and workers to secure each other’s confidence through the closer relations and the demonstration of their dependa-

bility permitted by constantly growing co-operation there at the normal point of contact, the job.

"It is idle to argue," so Mr. Hoover has said, "that there are no conflicts between the employer and the employee. But there are wide areas of activity in which their interests should coincide, and it is the part of statesmanship to organize this identity of interests."

I venture to assert that there are not 5 per cent of American factories which could not save great sums of money if they could obtain those suggestions for improving even the simplest of their jobs which would be gladly given by employees whose good-will and self-respect had been increased by means of greater security and responsibility in the doing of the daily job.

The same identity of interests between the various nations is to be found not within the factory, but within the world market. Certainly that world market is large enough to permit the utmost of friendship between Great Britain and ourselves. Nothing so threatens the peace of the world at this moment as the recent difficulties of understanding between these two nations. Altogether it would look as though the threat made by the Sinn Feiner there at Glasgow had been put into operation and the definite attempt made to further war between the two countries. But if Great Britain and ourselves, with all that both the present and the past have to say about the identity of our interests, cannot live in peace with each other, then this old world is not worth saving and the late war is proven the most tragic joke of history!

It is worth noticing, however, that it is in trade and not in politics that sore spots between these two—and between all other twos—will threaten. These will threaten all the more quickly if we fail to appreciate that America, in comparison with Great Britain, is the land of the abundant job. In all humility, too, we should appreciate that we live in



the land of the abundant job, not so much because of the American view-point as because of the American raw materials, not so much because of our initiative and imagination as of our iron ore and mountains of copper—because of our natural rather than our spiritual resources. Our own problems have been comparatively easy because until recently men could find a way out of the evil conditions of a factory or a factory city by going out to the free land of the frontier. Our frontier in America is now gone. We have therefore entered a new era in our national life. That era brings with it, and will increasingly bring with it, problems much more nearly resembling those of a crowded country than any we have ever known before. Luckily our producers and our distributors have given to the processes of both production and distribution an unparalleled study. This study has included the phenomena of the finest and most sensitive reactions having to do with the development and direction of human needs in the midst of the human relations of modern trade and commerce. As a result of this, American competitors to-day accept and practise to an extent unknown elsewhere the doctrine of creative evolution. To an extent unparalleled elsewhere, the sword points of competitive business have been beaten into ploughshares for cultivating fresh crops of buyers.

These crops, however, have been grown mainly in the home fields. As we grow closer to the condition of "Full up!" we must more and more take interest in the problem of the successful cultivation of foreign markets. In all ways, accordingly, our problems will approach those of Great Britain to-day. There it comes about naturally enough that the worker pays too much in terms of Opportunity for his Security. Here we pay too much in terms of Security for our Opportunity. And, incidentally, most of us assume too blithely that the opportunity of the old contacts in the small machine-shop is carried over by some



strange magic and still exist in our huge plants without the necessity of organized attention. Somewhere between these two extremes lies the efficient and happy nation.

All of us wish there were some easy way of achieving just this. That wish is the father of a vast deal of thinking about this system or that—something that will somehow work while we sleep. But “there ain’t no such animal!” The reason is that no scheme of itself will work except as we—all of us—put behind it all the resources of both our minds and our sympathies in the form of an intelligent and kindly public opinion.

And there’s the rub!

## CHAPTER XIII

### CAN WE GET "THE AIR" TO THE "WORKING FACES" IN THE WORLD FACTORY MINE?

LET me put it this way:

In college days I worked my passage to Europe as "second assistant scullion" on a cattle boat. After every meal the pantryman would push back onto the galley tables the dripping-pans of the roasts and other foods left after the first-cabin passengers had been served.

"Give that to the engineer's mess to-morrow. This for first-cabin soup to-night." So old Peter, the chef, would decree, like the czar he was. "And that—into the 'black pan' with it!"

By night the "black pan" would be piled high with a conglomeration of cutlets, potatoes, cabbage, etc., etc.—perfectly good food in the particular, but highly unappetizing in the mass. At eight o'clock there would be a hesitating knock at the galley door.

"'Tis oor turn for the black pan, sir!" would come in a whisper from a sailor, a stoker, or an oiler.

"Black-pan night" was feast night in the forecastle! During the voyage the sailors mildly protested and marched past the captain showing the day's food as provided. They asked for fresh bread once a day! That instead of the tiny loaves served only twice a week—I recall that the first loaf I ever saw when served me as a cattleman the summer preceding looked like salvation from starvation, because the food had been practically uneatable. I heard the pantryman say, the night of the "mutiny" that before he'd

serve fresh bread daily, he'd "see the bloody devils in 'ell first!" Every night of the voyage my mouth watered as I watched him eating the ice-cream which never was allowed to enter the galley.

How could such amazing differences in conditions exist on shipboard after they had been so largely abolished elsewhere? Because a ship suffers always from a bad case of what can be called "compartment-itis." Public opinion on board would correct the situation quickly if it had the information, but public opinion was deaf, blind, and dumb—therefore powerless—because on the ordinary ship it did not have the facts. The reason it did not have the facts is because steel partitions keep all the different groups apart—miles apart psychologically, though often scarcely an eighth of an inch apart in actuality.

Now the problem of successful ship operation does not require suddenly asking the stokers to come up and sit in the passengers' chairs, nor to have them and the sailors and the oilers form a committee to supplant the captain. It does involve, doubtless, some plan of representative dealing whereby each group as a whole can have something to say about the conditions of its work—that is, about the giving of its golden egg of service. It also requires making sure that the passengers themselves in one form or another, contribute their just *quid pro quo* for their leisurely enjoyment of the chairs. But most of all, the successful operation and safety of the ship—and that means everybody on it—requires that each shall have an intelligent and sympathetic understanding of the service performed by all the others, and so be able to award proportionate recognition of that service in terms of wages, hours, conditions, leisure, and partnership—all the forms that finally spell satisfactions. Without this proportionate recognition of our worth as obtained by the demonstration of our service, the mainspring within each and all of us refuses to release its energy.

Each of us continues to lay the golden egg of our service only as long as we observe a satisfactory proportion between our individual effort and our individual result.

A better balance of interests in that circle of needs and services is urgently called for. But neither government, managers, statesmen, workers, nor consumers can work out this matter of balanced recognitions of comparative services by themselves alone. Laws may or may not help—in the long run it requires an intelligent and sympathetic public opinion. In whatever form of society we adopt, the whole adjustment of the machine will depend upon that.

What we have failed to see is that this, in itself, has become an amazingly difficult affair within the past few years. As the heirs of all the ages, and especially of an industrialized and internationalized world, present-day society suffers from as bad a case of "compartment-itis" as the worst and the oldest of ocean liners.

The living compartment of the worker is made enormously difficult of access by his working compartment in modern specialized industry. Yet somehow or other that proportionate recognition must be got through to the worker at his work if he is to be happy in making his contribution—his indispensable contribution.

Take the coal-miner, for instance. He constitutes, in my opinion, one of the most pressing and dangerous problems in modern society. The real reason is that his job takes him away off into a separate town in an isolated part of the country, and then carries him, first, a thousand feet into the ground, and then a mile or two back into a dark, small room. By the necessities of his service he lives, as it were, in our very cellars—we cannot live without him. Yet we never see him. How can we get through *from* him our understanding of the compulsion of his job, which determines the conditions not only of his living, but of his thinking? And then how can we get through *to* him our

consequent recognition of his worth and his right to a normal life?

Well, the mining engineers have had the same problem with ventilation. In the old days it was considered enough, in a small and simple mine, to change the air in the main butts and headings. To-day the miner who feels any stoppage of air "at the face" immediately stops work. It is there that the gas comes from the coal; it is from there it must be removed. Elaborate laws lay down the number of feet at which a "break-through" must be placed whereby the air is continuously circulated right up to the face and away. The "bradish-man," or carpenter, knows that the greatest of disasters can come if, by his carelessness, some door leaks and the air can short-circuit itself in other channels than up to and past the "working faces."

To-day all of us millions who earn our living above ground are working in a vast and complicated array of rooms in the world-wide mine of modern industry. In the main butts and headings—at the town hall, the polls, the school, chamber of commerce, the club, the church—we meet each other and come to know and be known. Our doings there give slight chance for danger. But at the "working faces" away back in the darkness of some highly specialized job—like the docker's or the hobo's, or the twelve-hour steel worker's—men put their picks into the tiny pockets of danger-gas. Slight volatile little sensations of fatigue or discouragement, unsatisfied hopes, misunderstandings, suspicions—these can never be carried away until somehow we can get the air of public understandings—and recognitions—better circulated than at present.

Because of this, public thinking finds it difficult to understand the thoughts of men, not only on their jobs but in their more general lives as citizens. For in these days it is impossible for men to show their qualities as citizens very far apart from their qualities as workers. We live our way,



it cannot be repeated too often, into all the rooms of our thinking infinitely more than we think our way into the rooms of our living. For practically everybody, comparatively speaking, the most driving part of the living of our life is there in the rooms where we earn our living.

At this moment there is huge danger in the world factory mine because ventilation has not kept up with the elaboration of modern life and work. A vast quantity of men's recognition and understanding of each other is being short-circuited away from "the working faces." As the result, men are showing less interest in their jobs. Then other millions use that lessened activity as an argument to prove that men never want to work anyway—that human beings always follow the line of least resistance. *That is a lie! Men follow the line, not of least resistance, but the line of utmost recognitions and satisfactions per unit of effort expended.* When the recognitions are short-circuited away from the face, then, of course, men think of laying aside their tools.

The public controls. The public must understand its job just now is to get the circulation restored. It must have a larger faith in those who are too far away for it to see. It must fortify that faith with a better understanding of their service, and it *must* get the manifestation of that larger faith in terms of recognition to the workers *at their work*. In any system of society it will be just as essential and just as difficult. It is too late to try to solve the problem by going back to the point where every worker was an individual craftsman working in his own shop on the open street. That meant too high costs—and these meant the denial of great fields of service to millions. It is the demands of those needs of inexpensive services which, after all, are at the bottom of our "compartment-itis." We must accept it but conquer and subdue it.

"Allus mind thot ye keep goin' with the air in yer face!" said the old repairer, down in the darkness one day, when I

asked how a fellow could get out of a mine after he had lost his light.

Men will march by millions straight up to the cannon's mouth, if only as they move they can feel upon their faces the breath of your recognition and mine of the glory of their exploit—an exploit made possible only by the nobility of their souls.

The same hope and hunger is in the same hearts when men arise for the daily job while the whistle blows or the "knocker-up" pursues his noisy way. These men themselves are no different from the craftsmen and artificers of old. Their prayer—and therefore their power—is the same. It is we and our distance from them on the other side of those thin steel compartments of modern life who make more difficult the answer of that prayer. And without some answer to that prayer the whole great wheel of the world's life and happiness begins to slow down.

"Let us now praise famous men  
Even the artificer and workmaster,  
That passeth his time by night as by day;  
They that cut gravings of signets,  
And his diligence is to make great variety;  
He setteth his heart to preserve likeness in his portraiture,  
And is wakeful to finish his work.

So is the smith sitting by the anvil,  
And considering the unwrought iron;  
The vapour of the fire wasteth his flesh,  
And in the heat of the furnace doth he wrestle with his work;  
The noise of the hammer is ever in his ear,  
And his eyes are upon the pattern of the vessel.  
He setteth his heart upon perfecting his works,  
And is wakeful to adorn them perfectly.

So is the potter sitting at his work,  
And turning the wheel about with his feet,  
Who is always anxiously set at his work,

And all his handiwork is by measure;  
He fashioneth the clay with his arm,  
And bendeth its strength in front of his feet;  
He applieth his heart to finish the glazing,  
And is wakeful to make clean the furnace.

All these put their trust in their hands,  
And each becometh wise in his own works.  
Yes, though they be not sought for in the council of the people,  
Nor be exalted in the assembly;  
Though they sit not on the seat of the judge,  
Nor understand the covenant of judgment;  
Though they declare not instruction and judgment,  
And be not found among them that utter dark sayings;  
Yet without these shall not a city be inhabited,  
Nor shall men sojourn or walk up and down therein.  
*For these maintain the fabric of the world  
And in the handiwork of their craft is their prayer."*

—*Ecclesiasticus.*









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